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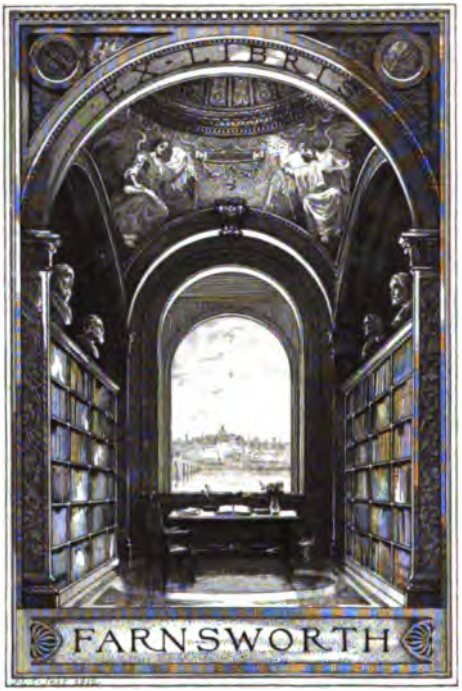
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RIENZI

THE LAST OF THE ROMAN TRIBUNES

BY

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON
(LORD LYTTON)

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON
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RIENZI:

THE LAST OF THE TRIBUNES.

BOOK V.

THE CRISIS.

QUESTO ha acceso 'l fuoco e la fiamma laquale non la par spotegnere. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. cap. 29.

He has kindled fire and flames which he will not be able to extinguish. — *Life of Cola di Rienzi.*

CHAPTER I.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE TRIBUNE.

THE brief words of the Tribune to Stephen Colonna, though they sharpened the rage of the proud old noble, were such as he did not on reflection deem it prudent to disobey. Accordingly, at the appointed hour he found himself in one of the halls of the Capitol, with a gallant party of his peers. Rienzi received them with more than his usual graciousness.

They sat down to the splendid board in secret uneasiness and alarm, as they saw that, with the exception of Stephen Colonna, none, save the conspirators, had been invited to the banquet. Rienzi, regardless of their silence and abstraction, was more than usually gay; the old Colonna more than usually sullen.

"We fear we have but ill pleased you, my Lord Colonna, by our summons. Once, methinks, we might more easily provoke you to a smile."

"Situations are changed, Tribune, since you were my guest."

"Why, scarcely so. I have risen, but you have not fallen. Ye walk the streets day and night in security and peace; your lives are safe from the robber, and your palaces no longer need bars and battlements to shield you from your fellow-citizens. I have risen, but *we all* have risen, — from barbarous disorder into civilized life! My Lord Gianni Colonna, whom we have made captain over Campagna, you will not refuse a cup to the Buono Stato, nor think we mistrust your valor when we say that we rejoice Rome hath no enemies to attest your generalship?"

"Methinks," quoth the old Colonna, bluntly, "we shall have enemies enough from Bohemia and Bavaria, ere the next harvest be green."

"And if so," replied the Tribune, calmly, "foreign foes are better than civil strife."

"Ay, if we have money in the treasury, which is but little likely if we have many more such holidays."

"You are ungracious, my lord," said the Tribune; "and besides, you are more uncomplimentary to Rome than to ourselves. What citizen would not part with gold to buy fame and liberty?"

"I know very few in Rome that would," answered the Baron. "But tell me, Tribune, you who are a notable casuist, which is the best for a state, — that its governor should be over-thrifty or over-lavish?"

"I refer the question to my friend Luca di Savelli," replied Rienzi. "He is a grand philosopher, and I wot well could explain a much knottier riddle, which we will presently submit to his acumen."

The Barons, who had been much embarrassed by the bold speech of the old Colonna, all turned their eyes to Savelli, who answered with more composure than was anticipated.

"The question admits a double reply. He who is *born* a ruler, and maintains a foreign army, governing by fear, should be penurious. He who is *made* ruler, who courts the people and would reign by love, must win their affection by generosity

and dazzle their fancies by pomp. Such, I believe, is the usual maxim in Italy, which is rife in all experience of state wisdom."

The Barons unanimously applauded the discreet reply of Savelli, excepting only the old Colonna.

"Yet pardon me, Tribune," said Stephen, "if I depart from the courtier-like decision of our friend, and opine, though with all due respect, that even a friar's coarse serge,[1] the parade of humility, would better become thee than this gaudy pomp, the parade of pride!" So saying, he touched the large loose sleeve, fringed with gold, of the Tribune's purple robe.

"Hush, father!" said Gianni, Colonna's son, coloring at the unprovoked rudeness and dangerous candor of the veteran.

"Nay, it matters not," said the Tribune, with affected indifference, though his lip quivered and his eye shot fire; and then, after a pause, he resumed with an awful smile: "If the Colonna love the serge of the friar, he may see enough of it ere we part. And now, my Lord Savelli, for my question, which I pray you listen to; it demands all your wit: Is it best for a State's Ruler to be over-forgiving, or over-just? Take breath to answer. You look faint — you grow pale — you tremble — you cover your face! Traitor and assassin, your conscience betrays you! My lords, relieve your accomplice, and take up the answer."

"Nay, if we are discovered," said the Orsini, rising in despair, "we will not fall unavenged. Die, tyrant!"

He rushed to the place where Rienzi stood, — for the Tribune also rose, — and made a thrust at his breast with his dagger; the steel pierced the purple robe, yet glanced harmlessly away, and the Tribune regarded the disappointed murderer with a scornful smile.

"Till yesternight I never dreamed that under the robe of state I should need the secret corselet," said he. "My lords, you have taught me a dark lesson, and I thank ye."

[1] "Vestimenta da Bizoco" was the phrase used by Colonna, — a phrase borrowed from certain heretics (*bizocchi*) who affected extreme austerity; afterwards the word passed into a proverb. See the comments of Zefirino Re, in *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*.



So saying, he clapped his hands, and suddenly the folding-doors at the end of the hall flew open, and discovered the saloon of the Council, hung with silk of a blood-red, relieved by rays of white, — the emblem of crime and death. At a long table sat the councillors in their robes; at the bar stood a ruffian form, which the banqueters too well recognized.

"Bid Rodolf of Saxony approach!" said the Tribune.

And led by two guards, the robber entered the hall.

"Wretch, *you* then betrayed us!" exclaimed one of the Frangipani.

"Rodolf of Saxony goes ever to the highest bidder," returned the miscreant with a horrid grin. "You gave me gold, and I would have slain your foe. Your foe defeated me: he gives me life; and life is a greater boon than gold!"

"Ye confess your crime, my lords! Silent! dumb! Where is your wit, Savelli? Where your pride, Rinaldo di Orsini? Gianni Colonna, is your chivalry come to this?

"Oh!" continued Rienzi, with deep and passionate bitterness, "oh! my lords, will nothing conciliate you, — not to me, but to Rome? What hath been my sin against you and yours? Disbanded ruffians (such as your accuser), dismantled fortresses, impartial law, — what man, in all the wild revolutions of Italy, sprung from the people, ever yielded less to their license? Not a coin of your coffers touched by wanton power, not a hair of your heads harmed by private revenge. You, Gianni Colonna, loaded with honors, intrusted with command; you, Alphonso di Frangipani, endowed with new principalities: did the Tribune remember one insult he received from you as the Plebeian? You accuse my pride: was it my fault that ye cringed and fawned upon my power, — flattery on your lips, poison at your hearts? No, *I* have not offended you; let the world know that in me you aimed at liberty, justice, law, order, the restored grandeur, the renovated rights of Rome! At these, the Abstract and the Immortal, not at this frail form, ye struck; by the divinity of these ye are defeated; for the outraged majesty of these, criminals and victims, ye must die!"

With these words, uttered with the tone and air that would

have become the loftiest spirit of the ancient city, Rienzi, with a majestic step, swept from the chamber into the Hall of Council.[1]

All that night the conspirators remained within that room, the doors locked and guarded; the banquet unremoved, and its splendor strangely contrasting with the mood of the guests.

The utter prostration and despair of these dastard criminals — so unlike the knightly nobles of France and England — has been painted by the historian in odious and withering colors. The old Colonna alone sustained his impetuous and imperious character. He strode to and fro the room like a lion in his cage, uttering loud threats of resentment and defiance, and beating at the door with his clenched hands, demanding egress and proclaiming the vengeance of the Pontiff.

The dawn came, slow and gray, upon that agonized assembly; and just as the last star faded from the melancholy horizon, and by the wan and comfortless heaven they regarded each other's faces, almost spectral with anxiety and fear, the great bell of the Capitol sounded the notes in which they well recognized the chime of death! It was then that the door opened, and a drear and gloomy procession of cordeliers, one to each Baron, entered the apartment! At that spectacle, we are told, the terror of the conspirators was so great that it froze up the very power of speech.[2] The greater part at length, deeming all hope over, resigned themselves to their ghostly confessors. But when the friar appointed to Stephen approached that passionate old man, he waved his hand impatiently, and said: "Tease me not! tease me not!"

"Nay, son, prepare for the awful hour."

"Son, indeed!" quoth the Baron. "I am old enough to be thy grandsire; and for the rest, tell him who sent thee that I neither am prepared for death, nor will prepare! I have

[1] The guilt of the Barons in their designed assassination of Rienzi, though hastily slurred over by Gibbon and other modern writers, is clearly attested by Muratori, the Bolognese Chronicle, etc. *They even confessed the crime.* (See *Cron. Estens: Muratori*, tom. xviii. p. 442.)

[2] Diventarono si gelati, che non poteano favellare.

made up my mind to live these twenty years, and longer too, — if I catch not my death with the cold of this accursed night."

Just at that moment a cry that almost seemed to rend the Capitol asunder was heard, as, with one voice, the multitude below yelled forth, —

"Death to the conspirators! — death! death!"

While this the scene in that hall, the Tribune issued from his chamber, in which he had been closeted with his wife and sister. The noble spirit of the one, the tears and grief of the other (who saw at one fell stroke perish the house of her betrothed), had not worked without effect upon a temper, stern and just indeed, but naturally averse from blood, and a heart capable of the loftiest species of revenge.

He entered the Council, still sitting, with a calm brow and even a cheerful eye.

"Pandulfo di Guido," he said, turning to that citizen, "you are right; you spoke as a wise man and a patriot when you said that to cut off with one blow, however merited, the noblest heads of Rome, would endanger the State, sully our purple with an indelible stain, and unite the nobility of Italy against us."

"Such, Tribune, was my argument, though the Council have decided otherwise."

"Hearken to the shouts of the populace; you cannot appease their honest warmth," said the demagogue Baroncelli.

Many of the Council murmured applause.

"Friends," said the Tribune, with a solemn and earnest aspect, "let not Posterity say that Liberty loves blood; let us for once adopt the example and imitate the mercy of our great Redeemer! We have triumphed, — let us forbear; we are saved, — let us forgive!"

The speech of the Tribune was supported by Pandulfo and others of the more mild and moderate policy; and after a short but animated discussion, the influence of Rienzi prevailed, and the sentence of death was revoked, but by a small majority.

"And now," said Rienzi, "let us be more than just, let us be generous. Speak, and boldly. Do any of ye think that I

have been over-hard, over-haughty with these stubborn spirits? I read your answer in your brows! I have! Do any of ye think this error of mine may have stirred them to their dark revenge? Do any of you deem that they partake, as we do, of human nature, that they are sensible to kindness, that they are softened by generosity, that they can be tamed and disarmed by such vengeance as is dictated to noble foes by Christian laws?"

"I think," said Pandulfo, after a pause, "that it will not be in human nature if the men you pardon, thus offending and thus convicted, again attempt your life!"

"Methinks," said Rienzi, "we must do even more than pardon. The first great Cæsar, when he did not crush a foe, strove to convert him to a friend —"

"And perished by the attempt," said Baroncelli, abruptly.

Rienzi started and changed color.

"If you would save these wretched prisoners, better not wait till the fury of the mob become ungovernable," whispered Pandulfo.

The Tribune roused himself from his revery.

"Pandulfo," said he, in the same tone, "my heart misgives me. The brood of serpents are in my hand: I do not strangle them: they may sting me to death in return for my mercy: it is their instinct! No matter; it shall not be said that the Roman Tribune bought with so many lives his own safety, nor shall it be written upon my gravestone, 'Here lies the coward who did not dare forgive.' What, ho! there, officers, unclose the doors! My masters, let us acquaint your prisoners with their sentence."

With that, Rienzi seated himself on the chair of state at the head of the table, and the sun, now risen, cast its rays over the blood-red walls, in which the Barons, marshalled in order into the chamber, thought to read their fate.

"My Lords," said the Tribune, "ye have offended the laws of God and man; but God teaches man the quality of mercy. Learn, at last, that I bear a charmed life. Nor is he whom, for high purposes, Heaven hath raised from the cottage to the popular throne, without invisible aid and spiritual protection.

If hereditary monarchs are deemed sacred, how much more one in whose power the divine hand hath writ its witness! Yes, over him who lives but for his country, whose greatness is his country's gift, whose life is his country's liberty, watch the souls of the just and the unsleeping eyes of the sworded seraphim! Taught by your late failure and your present peril, bid your anger against me cease; respect the laws, revere the freedom of your city, and think that no state presents a nobler spectacle than men born as ye are, — a patrician and illustrious order, — using your power to protect your city, your wealth to nurture its arts, your chivalry to protect its laws! Take back your swords; and the first man who strikes against the liberties of Rome, let *him* be your victim, even though that victim be the Tribune. Your cause has been tried, your sentence is pronounced. Renew your oath to forbear all hostility, private or public, against the government and the magistrates of Rome, and ye are pardoned; ye are free!"

Amazed, bewildered, the Barons mechanically bent the knee; the friars who had received their confessions administered the appointed oath; and while, with white lips, they muttered the solemn words, they heard below the roar of the multitude for their blood.

This ceremony ended, the Tribune passed into the banquet-hall, which conducted to a balcony whence he was accustomed to address the people; and never, perhaps, was his wonderful mastery over the passions of an audience (*ad persuadendum efficax dictator, quoque dulcis ac lepidus*)[1] more gently needed or more eminently shown than on that day; for the fury of the people was at its height, and it was long ere he succeeded in turning it aside. Before he concluded, however, every wave of the wild sea lay hushed. The orator lived to stand on the same spot, to plead for a life nobler than those he now saved, and to plead unheard and in vain!

As soon as the Tribune saw the favorable moment had arrived, the Barons were admitted into the balcony; in the presence of the breathless thousands they solemnly pledged themselves to protect the Good Estate. And thus the morning

[1] Petrarch of Rienzi.

which seemed to dawn upon their execution witnessed their reconciliation with the people.

The crowd dispersed, the majority soothed and pleased, — the more sagacious, vexed and dissatisfied.

"He has but increased the smoke and the flame which he was not able to extinguish," growled Cecco del Vecchio; and the smith's appropriate saying passed into a proverb and a prophecy.

Meanwhile the Tribune, conscious at least that he had taken the more generous course, broke up the Council, and retired to the chamber where Nina and his sister waited him. These beautiful young women had conceived for each other the tenderest affection. And their differing characters, both of mind and feature, seemed by contrast to heighten the charms of both; as in a skilful jewelry the pearl and diamond borrow beauty from each other. And as Irene now turned her pale countenance and streaming eyes from the bosom to which she had clung for support, — the timid sister, anxious, doubtful, wistful; the proud wife, sanguine and assured, as if never diffident of the intentions nor of the power of her Rienzi, — the contrast would have furnished to a painter no unworthy incarnation of the Love that hopeth, and the Love that feareth, all things.

"Be cheered, my sweet sister," said the Tribune, first caught by Irene's imploring look; "not a hair on the heads of those who boast the name of him thou lovest so well is injured. Thank Heaven," as his sister, with a low cry, rushed into his arms, "that it was against my life they conspired! Had it been another Roman's, mercy might have been a crime! Dearest, may Adrian love thee half as well as I! And yet, my sister and my child, none can know thy soft soul like he who watched over it since its first blossom expanded to the sun. My poor brother! had he lived, your counsel had been his; and methinks his gentle spirit often whispers away the sternness which, otherwise, would harden over mine. Nina, my queen, my inspirer, my monitor, ever thus let thy heart, masculine in my distress, be woman's in my power; and be to me, with Irene, upon earth what my brother is in heaven!"

The Tribune, exhausted by the trials of the night, retired for a few hours to rest; and as Nina, encircling him within her arms, watched over his noble countenance, — care hushed, ambition laid at rest, — its serenity had something almost of sublime. And tears of that delicious pride which woman sheds for the hero of her dreams stood heavy in the wife's eyes as she rejoiced more, in the deep stillness of her heart, at the prerogative, alone hers, of sharing his solitary hours, than in all the rank to which his destiny had raised her, and which her nature fitted her at once to adorn and to enjoy. In that calm and lonely hour she beguiled her heart by waking dreams vainer than the sleeper's, and pictured to herself the long career of glory, the august decline of peace, which were to await her lord.

And while she thus watched and thus dreamed, the cloud, as yet no bigger than a man's hand, darkened the horizon of a fate whose sunshine was wellnigh past!

CHAPTER II.

THE FLIGHT.

Fretting his proud heart as a steed frets on the bit, old Colonna regained his palace. To him, innocent of the proposed crime of his kin and compeers, the whole scene of the night and morning presented but one feature of insult and degradation. Scarce was he in his palace ere he ordered couriers, in whom he knew he could confide, to be in preparation for his summons. "This to Avignon," said he to himself, as he concluded an epistle to the Pontiff. "We will see whether the friendship of the great house of the Colonna will outweigh the frantic support of the rabble's puppet. This to Palestrina, — the rock is inaccessible! This to John di Vico; he may be relied upon, traitor though he be! This to Naples; the Colonna will disown the Tribune's ambassador if he throw not up the trust and hasten hither, not a lover, but a soldier!

And may this find Walter de Montreal! Ah! a precious messenger he sent us; but I will forgive all — all — for a thousand lances." And as with trembling hands he twined the silk round his letters, he bade his pages invite to his board, next day, all the signors who had been implicated with him on the previous night.

The Barons came, far more enraged at the disgrace of pardon than grateful for the boon of mercy. Their fears combined with their pride; and the shouts of the mob, the whine of the cordeliers, still ringing in their ears, they deemed united resistance the only course left to protect their lives and avenge their affront.

To them the public pardon of the Tribune seemed only a disguise to private revenge. All they believed was, that Rienzi did not dare to destroy them in the face of day; forgetfulness and forgiveness appeared to them as the means designed to lull their vigilance, while abasing their pride; and the knowledge of crime detected forbade them all hope of safety. The hand of their own assassin might be armed against them, or they might be ruined singly, one by one, as was the common tyrant-craft of that day. Singularly enough, Luca di Savelli was the most urgent for immediate rebellion. The fear of death made the coward brave.

Unable even to conceive the romantic generosity of the Tribune, the Barons were yet more alarmed when, the next day, Rienzi, summoning them one by one to a private audience, presented them with gifts and bade them forget the past; excused himself rather than them, and augmented their offices and honors.

In the Quixotism of a heart to which royalty was natural he thought that there was no medium course, and that the enmity he would not silence by death he could crush by confidence and favors. Such conduct from a born king to hereditary inferiors might have been successful; but the generosity of one who has abruptly risen over his lords is but the ostentation of insult. Rienzi in this, and perhaps in forgiveness itself, committed a fatal error of *policy*, which the dark sagacity of a Visconti, or, in later times, of a Borgia, would never have

perpetrated. But it was the error of a bright and a great mind.

Nina was seated in the grand saloon of the palace; it was the day of reception for the Roman ladies.

The attendance was so much less numerous than usual that it startled her, and she thought there was a coldness and restraint in the manner of the visitors present, which somewhat stung her vanity.

"I trust we have not offended the Signora Colonna," she said to the lady of Gianni, Stephen's son. "She was wont to grace our halls, and we miss much her stately presence."

"Madam, my lord's mother is unwell!"

"Is she so? We will send for her more welcome news. Methinks we are deserted to-day."

As she spoke, she carelessly dropped her handkerchief. The haughty dame of the Colonna bent not, not a hand stirred; and the Tribunessa looked for a moment surprised and disconcerted. Her eye roving over the throng, she perceived several, whom she knew as the wives of Rienzi's foes, whispering together with meaning glances, and more than one malicious sneer at her mortification was apparent. She recovered herself instantly, and said to the Signora Frangipani with a smile, "May we be a partaker of your mirth? You seem to have chanced on some gay thought which it were a sin not to share freely."

The lady she addressed colored slightly, and replied: "We were thinking, madam, that had the Tribune been present, his vow of knighthood would have been called into requisition."

"And how, Signora?"

"It would have been his pleasing duty, madam, to succor the distressed." And the Signora glanced significantly on the kerchief still on the floor.

"You designed me, then, this slight, Signoras," said Nina, rising with great majesty. "I know not whether your lords are equally bold to the Tribune; but this I know, that the Tribune's wife can in future forgive your absence. Four centuries ago a Frangipani might well have stooped to a Raselli; to-day, the dame of a Roman Baron might acknowledge a

superior in the wife of the first magistrate of Rome. I compel not your courtesy, nor seek it."

"We have gone too far," whispered one of the ladies to her neighbor. "Perhaps the enterprise may not succeed; and then —"

Further remark was cut short by the sudden entrance of the Tribune. He entered with great haste, and on his brow was that dark frown which none ever saw unquailing.

"How, fair matrons!" said he, looking round the room with a rapid glance, "ye have not deserted us yet? By the blessed cross, your lords pay a compliment to our honor to leave us such lovely hostages, or else, God's truth! they are ungrateful husbands. So, madam," turning sharp round to the wife of Gianni Colonna, "your husband is fled to Palestrina; yours, Signora Orsini, to Marino; yours with him, fair bride of Frangipani, — ye came hither to —. But *ye* are sacred even from a word!"

The Tribune paused a moment, evidently striving to suppress his emotion, as he observed the terror he had excited; his eye fell upon Nina, who, forgetting her previous vexation, regarded him with anxious amazement. "Yes," said he to her, "you alone, perhaps, of this fair assemblage know not that the nobles whom I lately released from the headsman's gripe are a second time forsworn. They have left home in the dead of night, and already the heralds proclaim them traitors and rebels. *Rienzi forgives no more!*"

"Tribune," exclaimed the Signora Frangipani, who had more bold blood in her veins than her whole house, "were I of thine own sex, I would cast the words 'traitor' and 'rebel,' given to my lord, in thine own teeth! Proud man, the Pontiff soon will fulfil that office!"

"Your lord is blest with a dove, fair one," said the Tribune, scornfully. "Ladies, fear not; while Rienzi lives, the wife even of his worst foe is safe and honored. The crowd will be here anon; our guards shall attend ye home in safety, or this palace may be your shelter, — for I warn ye that your lords have rushed into a great peril; and ere many days be passed, the streets of Rome may be as rivers of blood."

"We accept your offer, Tribune," said the Signora Frangipani, who was touched and, in spite of herself, awed by the Tribune's manner. And as she spoke, she dropped on one knee, picked up the kerchief, and presenting it respectfully to Nina, said, "Madam, forgive me. I alone of these present respect you more in danger than in pride."

"And I," returned Nina, as she leaned in graceful confidence on Rienzi's arm, "I reply that if there be danger, the more need of pride."

All that day and all that night rang the great bell of the Capitol. But on the following daybreak the assemblage was thin and scattered; there was a great fear stricken into the hearts of the people by the flight of the Barons, and they bitterly and loudly upbraided Rienzi for sparing them to this opportunity of mischief. That day the rumors continued; the murmurers for the most part remained within their houses, or assembled in listless and discontented troops. The next day dawned; the same lethargy prevailed. The Tribune summoned his Council, which was a Representative assembly.

"Shall we go forth as we are," said he, "with such few as will follow the Roman standard?"

"No," replied Pandulfo, who, by nature timid, was yet well acquainted with the disposition of the people, and therefore a sagacious counsellor. "Let us hold back; let us wait till the rebels commit themselves by some odious outrage, and then hatred will unite the waverers and resentment lead them."

This counsel prevailed; the event proved its wisdom. To give excuse and dignity to the delay, messengers were sent to Marino, whither the chief part of the Barons had fled, and which was strongly fortified, demanding their immediate return.

On the day on which the haughty refusal of the insurgents was brought to Rienzi, came fugitives from all parts of the Campagna. Houses burned, convents and vineyards pillaged, cattle and horses seized, — attested the warfare practised by the Barons, and animated the drooping Romans, by showing the mercies they might expect for themselves. That evening, of their own accord, the Romans rushed into the place of the

Capitol; Rinaldo Orsini had seized a fortress in the immediate neighborhood of Rome and had set fire to a tower, the flames of which were visible to the city. The tenant of the tower, a noble lady, old and widowed, was burned alive. Then rose the wild clamor, the mighty wrath, the headlong fury. The hour for action had arrived.[1]

CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE.

"I HAVE dreamed a dream," cried Rienzi, leaping from his bed. "The lion-hearted Boniface, foe and victim of the Colonna, hath appeared to me and promised victory.[2] Nina, prepare the laurel-wreath; this day victory shall be ours!"

"Oh, Rienzi! to-day?"

"Yes! hearken to the bell, hearken to the trumpet. Nay, I hear even now the impatient hoofs of my white war-steed! One kiss, Nina, ere I arm for victory! Stay, — comfort poor Irene; let me not see her: she weeps that my foes are akin to her betrothed. I cannot brook her tears; I watched her in her cradle. To-day I must have no weakness on my soul! Knaves, twice perjured! wolves, never to be tamed! — shall I meet ye at last sword to sword? Away, sweet Nina; to Irene, quick! Adrian is at Naples; and were he in Rome, her lover is sacred, though fifty times a Colonna."

With that, the Tribune passed into his wardrobe, where his pages and gentlemen attended with his armor. "I hear by our spies," said he, "that they will be at our gates ere noon, — four thousand foot, seven hundred horsemen. We will give them a hearty welcome, my masters. How, Angelo Villani, my pretty page, what do you out of your lady's service?"

[1] Ardea terre, arse la Castelluzza e case, *e uomini*. Non si schifo di ardere una nobile donna Vedova, veterana, in una torre. Per tale crudeltade li Romani furo più irati, etc. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. cap. 20.

[2] In questa notte mi è apparito Santo Bonifacio Papa, etc. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, cap. 32.

"I would fain see a warrior arm for Rome," said the boy, with a boy's energy.

"Bless thee, my child! there spoke one of Rome's true sons."

"And the Signora has promised me that I shall go with her guard to the gates, to hear the news —"

"And report the victory? Thou shalt. But they must not let thee come within shaft-shot. What! my Pandulfo, thou in mail?"

"Rome requires every man," said the citizen, whose weak nerves were strung by the contagion of the general enthusiasm.

"She doth; and once more I am proud to be a Roman. Now, gentles, the Dalmaticum: [1] I would that every foe should know Rienzi; and, by the Lord of Hosts, fighting at the head of the imperial people, I have a right to the imperial robe. Are the friars prepared? Our march to the gates shall be preceded by a solemn hymn: so fought our sires."

"Tribune, John di Vico is arrived with a hundred horse to support the Good Estate."

"He hath? The Lord has delivered us then of a foe, and given our dungeons a traitor! Bring hither yon casket, Angelo. So. Hark thee! Pandulfo, read this letter."

The citizen read, with surprise and consternation, the answer of the wily Prefect to the Colonna's epistle.

"He promises the Baron to desert to him in the battle, with the Prefect's banner," said Pandulfo. "What is to be done?"

"What! Take my signet, — here; see him lodged forthwith in the prison of the Capitol. Bid his train leave Rome; and if found acting with the Barons, warn them that their lord dies. Go, see to it without a moment's delay. Meanwhile, to the chapel; we will hear Mass."

Within an hour the Roman army, vast, miscellaneous, old men and boys mingled with the vigor of life, were on their march to the Gate of San Lorenzo. Of their number, which amounted to twenty thousand foot, not one-sixth could be deemed men-at-arms; but the cavalry were well equipped, and

[1] A robe or mantle of white borne by Rienzi, at one time belonging to the sacerdotal office, afterwards an emblem of empire.



consisted of the lesser Barons and the more opulent citizens. At the head of those rode the Tribune in complete armor, and wearing on his casque a wreath of oak and olive leaves wrought in silver. Before him waved the great gonfalon of Rome, while in front of this multitudinous array marched a procession of monks of the order of St. Francis, — for the ecclesiastical body of Rome went chiefly with the popular spirit and its enthusiastic leader, — slowly chanting the following hymn, which was made inexpressibly startling and imposing at the close of each stanza by the clash of arms, the blast of trumpets, and the deep roll of the drum, which formed, as it were, a martial chorus to the song: —

ROMAN WAR-SONG.

1.

March, march for your hearths and your altars!
Curs'd to all time be the dastard that falters;
Never on earth may his sins be forgiven, —
Death on his soul, shut the portals of heaven!
A curse on his heart, and a curse on his brain!
Who strikes not for Rome, shall to Rome be her Cain!
Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears!
Spirito Santo, Cavaliers! [1]
Blow, trumpets, blow!
Blow, trumpets, blow!
Gayly to glory we come,
Like a king in his pomp,
To the blast of the tromp,
And the roar of the mighty drum!
Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears!
Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!

2.

March, march for your Freedom and Laws!
Earth is your witness, — all Earth is your cause!
Seraph and saint from their glory shall heed ye,
The angel that smote the Assyrian shall lead ye!

[1] Rienzi's word of battle was *Spirito Santo, Cavaliere; i. e.*, "Cavalier" in the singular number. The plural number has been employed in the text, as somewhat more animated, and therefore better adapted to the kind of poetry into the service of which the watchword has been pressed.

To the Christ of the Cross man is never so holy
As in braving the proud in defence of the lowly!
Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears!
Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!
Blow, trumpets, blow!
Blow, trumpets, blow!
Gayly to glory we come,
Like a king in his pomp,
To the blast of the tromp,
And the roar of the mighty drum!
Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears!
Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!

3.

March, march! ye are sons of the Roman,
The sound of whose step was as fate to the foeman;
Whose realm, save the air and the wave, had no wall
As he strode through the world like a lord in his hall!
Though your fame hath sunk down to the night of the grave,
It shall rise from the field like the sun from the wave.
Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears!
Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!
Blow, trumpets, blow!
Blow, trumpets, blow!
Gayly to glory we come,
Like a king in his pomp,
To the blast of the tromp,
And the roar of the mighty drum!
Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears!
Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!

In this order they reached the wide waste that ruin and devastation left within the gates, and marshalled in long lines on either side, extending far down the vistaed streets, and leaving a broad space in the centre, awaited the order of their leader.

"Throw open the gates and admit the foe!" cried Rienzi with a loud voice, as the trumpets of the Barons announced their approach.

Meantime the insurgent Patricians, who had marched that morning from a place called the Monument, four miles distant, came gallantly and boldly on.

With old Stephen, whose great height, gaunt frame, and

lordly air showed well in his gorgeous mail, rode his sons, — the Frangipani and the Savelli, and Giordano Orsini, brother to Rinaldo.

"To-day the tyrant shall perish!" said the proud Baron, "and the flag of the Colonna shall wave from the Capitol."

"The flag of the Bear," said Giordano Orsini, angrily. "The victory will not be *yours* alone, my lord!"

"Our house ever took precedence in Rome," replied the Colonna, haughtily.

"Never while one stone of the palaces of the Orsini stands upon another."

"Hush!" said Luca di Savelli; "are ye dividing the skin while the lion lives? We shall have fierce work to-day."

"Not so," said the old Colonna; "John di Vico will turn, with his Romans, at the first onset, and some of the malcontents within have promised to open the gates. — How, knave?" as a scout rode up breathless to the Baron. "What tidings?"

"The gates are opened; not a spear gleams from the walls!"

"Did I not tell ye, lords?" said the Colonna, turning round triumphantly. "Methinks we shall win Rome without a single blow. Grandson, where now are thy silly forebodings?" This was said to Pietro, one of his grandsons, — the first born of Gianni, — a comely youth, not two weeks wedded, who made no reply. "My little Pietro here," continued the Baron, speaking to his comrades, "is so new a bridegroom that last night he dreamed of his bride, and deems it, poor lad, a portent."

"She was in deep mourning, and glided from my arms uttering 'Woe, woe, to the Colonna!'" said the young man, solemnly.

"I have lived nearly ninety years," replied the old man, "and I may have dreamed, therefore, some forty thousand dreams, — of which two came true, and the rest were false. Judge, then, what chances are in favor of the science!"

Thus conversing, they approached within bow-shot of the gates, which were still open. All was silent as death. The army, which was composed chiefly of foreign mercenaries, halted in deliberation, when lo! a torch was suddenly cast on

high over the walls; it gleamed a moment, and then hissed in the miry pool below.

"It is the signal of our friends within, as agreed on," cried old Colonna. "Pietro, advance with your company!" The young nobleman closed his visor, put himself at the head of the band under his command, and with his lance in his rest, rode in a half gallop to the gates. The morning had been clouded and overcast, and the sun, appearing only at intervals, now broke out in a bright stream of light, and glittered on the waving plume and shining mail of the young horseman disappearing under the gloomy arch, several paces in advance of his troop. On swept his followers, forward went the cavalry, headed by Gianni Colonna, Pietro's father. There was a minute's silence, broken only by the clatter of the arms and tramp of hoofs, when from within the walls rose the abrupt cry: "Rome, the Tribune, and the People! *Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!*" The main body halted aghast. Suddenly Gianni Colonna was seen flying backward from the gate at full speed.

"My son, my son!" he cried; "they have murdered him!" He halted abrupt and irresolute; then adding, "But I will avenge!" wheeled round, and spurred again through the arch, when a huge machine of iron, shaped as a portcullis, suddenly descended upon the unhappy father and crushed man and horse to the ground, — one blent, mangled, bloody mass.

The old Colonna saw, and scarce believed his eyes; and ere his troop recovered its stupor, the machine rose, and over the corpse dashed the Popular Armament. Thousands upon thousands, they came on, a wild, clamorous, roaring stream. They poured on all sides upon their enemies, who, drawn up in steady discipline, and clad in complete mail, received and broke their charge.

"Revenge and the Colonna!" "The Bear and the Orsini!" "Charity and the Frangipani!"[1] "Strike for the Snake[2]

[1] Who had taken their motto from some fabled ancestor who had broken bread with a beggar in a time of famine.

[2] The Lion was, however, the animal usually arrogated by the heraldic vanity of the Savelli.

and the Savelli!" were then heard on high, mingled with the German and hoarse shout, "Full purses and the Three Kings of Cologne!" The Romans, rather ferocious than disciplined, fell butchered in crowds round the ranks of the mercenaries; but as one fell, another succeeded, and still burst with undiminished fervor the counter-cry of "Rome, the Tribune, and the People! *Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!*" Exposed to every shaft and every sword by his emblematic diadem and his imperial robe, the fierce Rienzi led on each assault, wielding an enormous battle-axe, for the use of which the Italians were celebrated, and which he regarded as a national weapon. Inspired by every darker and sterner instinct of his nature, his blood heated, his passions aroused, fighting as a citizen for liberty, as a monarch for his crown, his daring seemed to the astonished foe as that of one frantic, his preservation that of one inspired: now here, now there; wherever flagged his own, or failed the opposing, force, glittered his white robe and rose his bloody battle-axe. But his fury seemed rather directed against the chiefs than the herd; and still where his charger wheeled was heard his voice, "Where is a Colonna?" "Defiance to the Orsini!" "*Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!*" Three times was the sally led from the gate, three times were the Romans beaten back; and on the third, the gonfalon, borne before the Tribune, was cloven to the ground. Then, for the first time, he seemed amazed and alarmed, and raising his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, "O Lord, hast Thou then forsaken me?" With that, taking heart, once more he waved his arm, and again led forward his wild array.

At eve the battle ceased. Of the Barons who had been the main object of the Tribune's assault, the pride and boast was broken. Of the princely line of the Colonna, three lay dead. Giordano Orsini was mortally wounded; the fierce Rinaldo had not shared the conflict. Of the Frangipani, the haughtiest signors were no more; and Luca, the dastard head of the Savelli, had long since saved himself by flight. On the other hand, the slaughter of the citizens had been prodigious; the ground was swamped with blood; and over heaps of slain (steeds and riders) the twilight star beheld Rienzi and the

Romans returning, victors, from the pursuit. Shouts of rejoicing followed the Tribune's panting steed through the arch; and just as he entered the space within, crowds of those whose infirmities, sex, or years had not allowed them to share the conflict, — women and children and drivelling age, — mingled with the bare feet and dark robes of monks and friars, being apprised of the victory, were prepared to hail his triumph.

Rienzi reined his steed by the corpse of the boy Colonna, which lay half immersed in a pool of water, and close by it, removed from the arch where he had fallen, lay that of Gianni Colonna, — that Gianni Colonna whose spear had dismissed his brother's gentle spirit. He glanced over the slain, as the melancholy Hesperus played upon the bloody pool and the gory corselet, with a breast heaved with many emotions; and turning, he saw the young Angelo, who, with some of Nina's guard, had repaired to the spot, and had now approached the Tribune.

"Child," said Rienzi, pointing to the dead, "*blessed art thou who hast no blood of kindred to avenge!* To him who hath, sooner or later comes the hour; and an awful hour it is!"

The words sank deep into Angelo's heart, and in after life became words of fate to the speaker and the listener.

Ere Rienzi had well recovered himself, and as were heard around him the shrieks of the widows and mothers of the slain, the groans of the dying, the exhortations of the friars, mingled with sounds of joy and triumph, — a cry was raised by the women and stragglers on the battle-field without, of "The foe! the foe!"

"To your swords!" cried the Tribune; "fall back in order! Yet they cannot be so bold!"

The tramp of horses, the blast of a trumpet, were heard; and presently, at full speed, some thirty horsemen dashed through the gate.

"Your bows!" exclaimed the Tribune, advancing. "Yet hold, the leader is unarmed; it is our own banner. By our Lady, it is our ambassador of Naples, the Lord Adrian di Castello!"

Panting, breathless, covered with dust, Adrian halted at the

pool, red with the blood of his kindred, and their pale faces, set in death, glared upon him.

"Too late; alas! alas! Dread fate! unhappy Rome!"

"They fell into the pit they themselves had digged," said the Tribune, in a firm but hollow voice. "Noble Adrian, would thy counsels had prevented this!"

"Away, proud man, away!" said Adrian, impatiently waving his hand. "Thou shouldst protect the lives of Romans, and — O Gianni! Pietro! could not birth, renown, and thy green years, poor boy, — could not these save ye?"

"Pardon him, my friends," said the Tribune to the crowd; "his grief is natural, and he knows not all their guilt. Back, I pray ye; leave him to our ministering!"

It might have fared ill for Adrian, but for the Tribune's brief speech. And as the young lord, dismounting, now bent over his kinsmen, the Tribune also, surrendering his charger to his squires, approached, and despite Adrian's reluctance and aversion, drew him aside. "Young friend," said he, mournfully, "my heart bleeds for you. Yet bethink ye, — the wrath of the crowd is fresh upon them; be prudent."

"Prudent!"

"Hush! by my honor, these men were not worthy of your name. Twice perjured, once assassins, twice rebels; listen to me!"

"Tribune, I ask no other construing of what I see: they might have died justly, or been butchered foully; but there is no peace between the executioner of my race and me."

"Will *you*, too, be forsworn? Thine oath! Come, come; I hear not these words! Be composed, retire; and if, three days hence, you impute any other blame to me than that of unwise lenity, I absolve you from your oath, and you are free to be my foe. The crowd gape and gaze upon us: a minute more, and I may not avail to save you."

The feelings of the young patrician were such as utterly baffle description. He had never been much amongst his house, nor ever received more than common courtesy at their hands. But lineage is lineage still! And there, in the fatal hazard of war, lay the tree and sapling, the prime and hope of

his race. He felt there was no answer to the Tribune: the very place of their death proved they had fallen in an assault upon their countrymen. He sympathized not with their cause, but their fate. And rage, revenge alike forbidden, his heart was the more softened to the shock and paralysis of grief. He did not, therefore, speak, but continued to gaze upon the dead, while large and unheeded tears flowed down his cheeks; and his attitude of dejection and sorrow was so moving that the crowd, at first indignant, now felt for his affliction. At length his mind seemed made up. He turned to Rienzi, and said, falteringly: "Tribune, I blame you not, nor accuse. If you have been rash in this, God will have blood for blood. I wage no war with you, — you say right, my oath prevents me; and if you govern well, I can still remember that I am Roman. But — but — look to that bleeding clay; we meet no more! Your sister — God be with her! — between her and me flows a dark gulf!" The young noble paused some moments, choked by his emotions, and then continued: "These papers discharge me of my mission. Standard-bearers, lay down the banner of the Republic. Tribune, speak not; I would be calm — calm! And so farewell to Rome!" With a hurried glance towards the dead, he sprang upon his steed, and, followed by his train, vanished through the arch.

The Tribune had not attempted to detain him, had not interrupted him. He felt that the young noble had thought, acted as became him best. He followed him with his eyes.

"And thus," said he, gloomily, "Fate plucks from me my noblest friend and my justest counsellor: a better man Rome never lost!"

Such is the eternal doom of disordered states. The mediator between rank and rank, — the kindly noble, the dispassionate patriot, the first to act, the most hailed in action, — darkly vanishes from the scene. Fiercer and more unscrupulous spirits alone stalk the field; and no neutral and harmonizing link remains between hate and hate, until exhaustion, sick with horrors, succeeds to frenzy, and despotism is welcomed as repose!

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOLLOWNESS OF THE BASE.

THE rapid and busy march of state events has led us long away from the sister of the Tribune and the betrothed of Adrian. And the sweet thoughts and gentle day-dreams of that fair and enamoured girl, however full to *her* of an interest beyond all the storms and perils of ambition, are not so readily adapted to narration: their soft monotony a few words can paint. They knew but one image, they tended to but one prospect. Shrinking from the glare of her brother's court, and eclipsed, when she forced herself to appear, by the more matured and dazzling beauty and all-commanding presence of Nina, to her the pomp and crowd seemed an unreal pageant, from which she retired to the *truth of life*, — the hopes and musings of her own heart. Poor girl! with all the soft and tender nature of her dead brother, and none of the stern genius and the prodigal ambition, — the eye-fatiguing ostentation and fervor of the living, — she was but ill fitted for the unquiet but splendid region to which she was thus suddenly transferred.

With all her affection for Rienzi, she could not conquer a certain fear which, conjoined with the difference of sex and age, forbade her to be communicative with him upon the subject most upon her heart.

As the absence of Adrian at the Neapolitan Court passed the anticipated date (for at no court then, with a throne fiercely disputed, did the Tribune require a nobler or more intelligent representative, — and intrigues and counter-intrigues delayed his departure from week to week), she grew uneasy and alarmed. Like many, themselves unseen, inactive, the spectators of the scene, she saw involuntarily farther into the time than the deeper intellect either of the Tribune or Nina; and the dangerous discontent of the nobles was visible and

audible to her in looks and whispers which reached not acuter or more suspected ears and eyes. Anxiously, restlessly, did she long for the return of Adrian, not from selfish motives alone, but from well-founded apprehensions for her brother. With Adrian di Castello, alike a noble and a patriot, each party had found a mediator; and his presence grew daily more needed, till at length the conspiracy of the Barons had broken out. From that hour she scarcely dared to hope; her calm sense, unblinded by the high-wrought genius which, as too often happens, made the Tribune see harsh realities through a false and brilliant light, perceived that the Rubicon was passed; and through all the events that followed she could behold but two images, — danger to her brother, separation from her betrothed.

With Nina alone could her full heart confer; for Nina, with all the differences of character, was a woman who loved. And this united them. In the earlier power of Rienzi, many of their happiest hours had been passed together, remote from the gaudy crowd, alone and unrestrained, in the summer nights, on the moonlit balconies, in that interchange of thought, sympathy, and consolation which to two impassioned and guileless women makes the most interesting occupation and the most effectual solace. But of late this intercourse had been much marred. From the morning in which the Barons had received their pardon, to that on which they had marched on Rome, had been one succession of fierce excitements. Every face Irene saw was clouded and overcast; all gayety was suspended; bustling and anxious councillors or armed soldiers had for days been the only visitors of the palace. Rienzi had been seen but for short moments, his brow wrapped in care. Nina had been more fond, more caressing than ever, but in those caresses there seemed a mournful and ominous compassion. The attempts at comfort and hope were succeeded by a sickly smile and broken words, and Irene was prepared, by the presentiments of her own heart, for the stroke that fell. Victory was to her brother, his foe was crushed, Rome was free; but the lofty house of the Colonnas had lost its stateliest props, and Adrian was gone forever!

She did not blame him; she could not blame her brother: each had acted as became his several station. She was the poor sacrifice of events and fate, — the Iphigenia to the Winds which were to bear the bark of Rome to the haven, or, it might be, to whelm it in the abyss. She was stunned by the blow; she did not even weep or complain; she bowed to the storm that swept over her, and it passed. For two days she neither took food nor rest; she shut herself up; she asked only the boon of solitude: but on the third morning she recovered as by a miracle, for on the third morning the following letter was left at the palace: —

IRENE, — Ere this you have learned my deep cause of grief; you feel that to a Colonna, Rome can no longer be a home, nor Rome's Tribune be a brother. While I write these words honor but feebly supports me; all the hopes I had formed, all the prospects I had pictured, all the love I bore and bear thee, rush upon my heart, and I can only feel that I am wretched. Irene, Irene! your sweet face rises before me, and in those beloved eyes I read that I am forgiven, — I am understood; and dearly as I know thou lovest me, thou wouldst rather I were lost to thee, rather I were in the grave with my kinsmen, than know I lived the reproach of my order, the recreant of my name. Ah! why was I a Colonna; why did Fortune make me noble, and nature and circumstance attach me to the people? I am barred alike from love and from revenge; all my revenge falls upon thee and me. Adored! we are perhaps separated forever; but by all the happiness I have known by thy side, by all the rapture of which I dreamed, by that delicious hour which first gave thee to my gaze, when I watched the soft soul returning to thine eyes and lip, by thy first blushing confession of love, by our first kiss, by our last farewell, I swear to be faithful to thee to the last! None other shall ever chase thine image from my heart. And now, when Hope seems over, Faith becomes doubly sacred; and thou, my beautiful, wilt thou not remember me, — wilt thou not feel as if we were the betrothed of Heaven? In the legends of the North we are told of the knight who, returning from the Holy Land, found his mistress (believing his death) the bride of Heaven, and he built a hermitage by the convent where she dwelt; and though they never saw each other more, their souls were faithful unto death. Even so, Irene, be we to each other, — dead to all else, betrothed in memory, to be wedded above! And yet, yet ere I close, one hope dawns upon me. Thy brother's career, bright and lofty, may be but as a falling star: should darkness swallow it, should his power cease, should

his throne be broken, and Rome know no more her Tribune; shouldst thou no longer have a brother in the judge and destroyer of my house; shouldst thou be stricken from pomp and state; shouldst thou be friendless, kindredless, alone, — then, without a stain on mine honor, without the shame and odium of receiving power and happiness from hands yet red with the blood of my race, I may claim thee as my own. Honor ceases to command when thou ceasest to be great. I dare not too fondly indulge this dream, — perchance it is a sin in both. But it must be whispered, that thou mayest know all thy Adrian, all his weakness and his strength. My own loved, my ever loved, — loved more fondly now, when loved despairingly, — farewell! May angels heal thy sorrow, and guard *me* from sin, that *hereafter* at least we may meet again!

"He loves me, he loves me still!" said the maiden, weeping at last; "and I am blest once more!"

With that letter pressed to her heart, she recovered outwardly from the depth of her affliction; she met her brother with a smile, and Nina with embraces; and if still she pined and sorrowed, it was in that "concealment" which is the "worm i' the bud."

Meanwhile, after the first flush of victory, lamentation succeeded to joy in Rome; so great had been the slaughter that the private grief was large enough to swallow up all public triumph, and many of the mourners blamed even their defender for the swords of the assailant: *Roma fu terribilmente vedovata.*[1] The numerous funerals deeply affected the Tribune; and in proportion to his sympathy with his people, grew his stern indignation against the Barons. Like all men whose religion is intense, passionate, and zealous, the Tribune had little toleration for those crimes which went to the root of religion. Perjury was to him the most base and inexpiable of offences, and the slain Barons had been twice perjured. In the bitterness of his wrath he forbade their families for some days to lament over their remains; and it was only in private and in secret that he permitted them to be interred in their ancestral vaults, — an excess of vengeance which sullied his laurels, but which was scarcely inconsistent with the stern patriotism of his character. Impatient to finish what he had

[1] "Rome was terribly widowed."



begun, anxious to march at once to Marino, where the insurgents collected their shattered force, he summoned his Council, and represented the certainty of victory, and its result in the complete restoration of peace. But pay was due to the soldiery; they already murmured; the treasury was emptied: it was necessary to fill it by raising a new tax.

Among the councillors were some whose families had suffered grievously in the battle: they lent a lukewarm attention to propositions of continued strife. Others, among whom was Pandulfo, timid but well-meaning, aware that grief and terror even of their own triumph had produced reaction amongst the people, declared that they would not venture to propose a new tax. A third party, headed by Baroncelli, — a demagogue whose ambition was without principle, but who, by pandering to the worst passions of the populace, by a sturdy coarseness of nature with which they sympathized, and by that affectation of advancing what we now term the "movement," which often gives to the fiercest fool an advantage over the most prudent statesman, had quietly acquired a great influence with the lower ranks, — offered a more bold opposition. They dared even to blame the proud Tribune for the gorgeous extravagance they had themselves been the first to recommend, and half insinuated sinister and treacherous motives in his acquittal of the Barons from the accusation of Rodolf. In the very Parliament which the Tribune had revived and remodelled for the support of freedom, freedom was abandoned. His fiery eloquence met with a gloomy silence, and, finally, the votes were against his propositions for the new tax and the march to Marino. Rienzi broke up the Council in haste and disorder. As he left the hall, a letter was put into his hands; he read it, and remained for some moments as one thunderstruck. He then summoned the Captain of his Guards, and ordered a band of fifty horsemen to be prepared for his commands; he repaired to Nina's apartment, he found her alone, and stood for some moments gazing upon her so intently that she was awed and chilled from all attempt at speech. At length he said abruptly, —

"We must part."

"Part?"

"Yes, Nina; your guard is preparing. You have relations, I have friends, at Florence; Florence must be your home."

"Cola —"

"Look not on me thus. In power, in state, in safety, you were my ornament and counsellor. *Now* you but embarrass me. And —"

"Oh, Cola, speak not thus! What hath chanced? Be not so cold, frown not, turn not away! Am I not something more to thee than the partner of joyous hours, the minion of love? Am I not thy wife, Cola, — not thy leman?"

"Too dear, too dear to me," muttered the Tribune; "with thee by my side I shall be but half a Roman. Nina, the base slaves whom I myself made free, desert me. Now, in the very hour in which I might sweep away forever all obstacles to the regeneration of Rome; now, when one conquest points the path to complete success; now, when the land is visible, — my fortune suddenly leaves me in the midst of the seas! There is greater danger now than in the rage of the Barons, — the Barons are fled; it is the People who are becoming traitors to Rome and to me."

"And wouldst thou have *me* traitor also? No, Cola; in death itself Nina shall be beside thee. Life and honor are reflected but from thee, and the stroke that slays the substance shall destroy the humble shadow. I will not part from thee."

"Nina," said the Tribune, contending with strong and convulsive emotion, "it may be literally of *death* that you speak. Go; leave one who can no longer protect you or Rome!"

"Never, never!"

"You are resolved?"

"I am."

"Be it so," said the Tribune, with deep sadness in his tone. "Arm thyself for the worst."

"There is no *worst* with thee, Cola!"

"Come to my arms, brave woman; thy words rebuke my weakness! But my sister! If *I* fall, *you*, Nina, will not survive, — your beauty a prey to the most lustful heart and the

strongest hand; *we* will have the same tomb on the wrecks of Roman liberty. But Irene is of weaker mould. Poor child! I have robbed her of a lover, and now — "

"You are right: let Irene go. And in truth we may well disguise from her the real cause of her departure. Change of scene were best for her grief, and under all circumstances would seem decorum to the curious. I will see and prepare her."

"Do so, sweetheart; I would gladly be a moment alone with thought. But remember, she must part to-day: our sands run low."

As the door closed on Nina, the Tribune took out the letter and again read it deliberately. "So the Pope's Legate left Sienna; prayed that Republic to withdraw its auxiliary troops from Rome; proclaimed me a rebel and a heretic; thence repaired to Marino; now in council with the Barons. Why, have my dreams belied me, then, — false as the waking things that flatter and betray by day? In such peril will the people forsake me and themselves? Army of saints and martyrs, shades of heroes and patriots, have ye abandoned forever your ancient home? No, no; I was not raised to perish thus. I will defeat them yet, and leave my name a legacy to Rome, — a warning to the oppressor, an example to the free!"

CHAPTER V.

THE ROTTENNESS OF THE EDIFICE.

The kindly skill of Nina induced Irene to believe that it was but the tender consideration of her brother to change a scene embittered by her own thoughts, and in which the notoriety of her engagement with Adrian exposed her to all that could mortify and embarrass, that led to the proposition of her visit to Florence. Its suddenness was ascribed to the occasion of an unexpected mission to Florence (for a loan of arms and money), which thus gave her a safe and honored escort. Passively she

submitted to what she herself deemed a relief; and it was agreed that she should for a while be the guest of a relation of Nina's who was the abbess of one of the wealthiest of the Florentine convents: the idea of monastic seclusion was welcome to the bruised heart and wearied spirit.

But though not apprised of the immediate peril of Rienzi, it was with deep sadness and gloomy forebodings that she returned his embrace and parting blessing; and when at length alone in her litter and beyond the gates of Rome, she repented a departure to which the chance of danger gave the appearance of desertion.

Meanwhile, as the declining day closed around the litter and its troop, more turbulent actors in the drama demand our audience. The traders and artisans of Rome at that time, and especially during the popular government of Rienzi, held weekly meetings in each of the thirteen quarters of the city. And in the most democratic of these, Cecco del Vecchio was an oracle and leader. It was at that assembly, over which the smith presided, that the murmurs that preceded the earthquake were heard.

"So," cried one of the company, Luigi, the goodly butcher, "they say he wanted to put a new tax on us; and that is the reason he broke up the Council to-day, because, good men, they were honest, and had bowels for the people: it is a shame and a sin that the treasury should be empty."

"I told him," said the smith, "to beware how he taxed the people. Poor men won't be taxed. But as he does not follow my advice, he must take the consequence: the horse runs from one hand, the halter remains in the other."

"Take *your* advice, Cecco! I warrant me his stomach is too high for that now. Why, he is grown as proud as a pope."

"For all that, he is a great man," said one of the party. "He gave us laws, he rid the Campagna of robbers, filled the streets with merchants, and the shops with wares, defeated the boldest lords and fiercest soldiery of Italy —"

"And now wants to tax the people! That 's all the thanks we get for helping him," said the grumbling Cecco.

"What would he have been without us? We that make can unmake."

"But," continued the advocate, seeing that he had his supporters, "but then he taxes us for our own liberties."

"Who strikes at them now?" asked the butcher.

"Why, the Barons are daily mustering new strength at Marino."

"Marino is not Rome," said Luigi, the butcher. "Let's wait till they come to our gates again; we know how to receive them. Though, for the matter of that, I think we have had enough fighting, — my two poor brothers had each a stab too much for them. Why won't the Tribune, if he *be* a great man, let us have peace? All we want now is quiet."

"Ah!" said a seller of horse-harness, "let him make it up with the Barons. They were good customers, after all."

"For my part," said a merry-looking fellow, who had been a gravedigger in bad times, and had now opened a stall of wares for the living, "I could forgive him all, but bathing in the holy vase of porphyry."

"Ah, that was a bad job!" said several, shaking their heads.

"And the knighthood was but a silly show, an' it were not for the wine from the horse's nostrils, — *that* had some sense in it."

"My masters," said Cecco, "the folly was in not beheading the Barons when he had them all in the net; and so Messere Baroncelli says. (Ah! Baroncelli is an honest man, and follows no half measures.) It was a sort of treason to the people not to do so. Why, but for that we should never have lost so many tall fellows by the gate of San Lorenzo."

"True, true! it was a shame; some say the Barons bought him."

"And then," said another, "those poor Lords Colonna, — boy and man, — they were the best of the family, save the Castello. I vow I pitied them."

"But to the point," said one of the crowd, *the richest* of the set: "*the tax is the thing.* The ingratitude to tax *us!* Let him dare to do it!"

"Oh! he will not dare, for I hear that the Pope's bristles are up at last; so he will only have *us* to depend upon!"

The door was thrown open, a man rushed in open-mouthed, —

"Masters, masters, the Pope's legate has arrived at Rome and sent for the Tribune, who has just left his presence."

Ere his auditors had recovered their surprise, the sound of trumpets made them rush forth; they saw Rienzi sweep by with his usual cavalcade and in his proud array. The twilight was advancing, and torch-bearers preceded his way. Upon his countenance was deep calm, but it was not the calm of contentment. He passed on, and the street was again desolate. Meanwhile Rienzi reached the Capitol in silence, and mounted to the apartments of the palace, where Nina, pale and breathless, awaited his return.

"Well, well, thou smilest! No, — it is that dread smile, worse than frowns. Speak, beloved, speak! What said the Cardinal?"

"Little thou wilt love to hear. He spoke at first, high and solemnly, about the crime of declaring the Romans free; next about the treason of asserting that the election of the King of Rome was in the hands of the Romans."

"Well, thy answer?"

"That which became Rome's Tribune: I re-asserted each right, and proved it. The Cardinal passed to other charges."

"What?"

"The blood of the Barons by San Lorenzo, — blood only shed in our own defence against perjured assailants: this is in reality the main crime. The Colonna have the Pope's ear. Furthermore, the sacrilege, — yes, the sacrilege (come laugh, Nina, laugh!) of bathing in a vase of prophyry used by Constantine while yet a heathen!"

"Can it be! What saidst thou?"

"I laughed. 'Cardinal,' quoth I, 'what was not too good for a heathen is not too good for a Christian Catholic!' And verily the sour Frenchman looked as if I had smote him on the hip. When he had done, I asked him, in my turn, 'Is it alleged against me that I have wronged one man in my judgment-court?' Silence. 'Is it said that I have broken one law of

the state?' Silence. 'Is it even whispered that trade does not flourish, that life is not safe, that, abroad or at home, the Roman name is not honored to that point which no former rule can parallel?' Silence. 'Then,' said I, 'Lord Cardinal, I demand thy thanks, not thy censure.' The Frenchman looked and looked, and trembled and shrank, and then out he spoke. 'I have but one mission to fulfil, on the part of the Pontiff: resign at once thy Tribuneship, or the Church inflicts upon thee its solemn curse.'"

"How, how?" said Nina, turning very pale; "what is it that awaits thee?"

"Excommunication!"

This awful sentence, by which the spiritual arm had so often stricken down the fiercest foe, came to Nina's ears as a knell. She covered her face with her hands. Rienzi paced the room with rapid strides. "The curse!" he muttered; "the Church's curse, — for me, for ME!"

"Oh, Cola! didst thou not seek to pacify this stern —"

"Pacify! Death and dishonor! Pacify! 'Cardinal,' I said, and I felt his soul shrivel at my gaze, 'my power I received from the people, — to the people alone I render it. For my soul, man's words cannot scathe it. Thou, haughty priest, thou thyself art the accursed if, puppet and tool of low cabals and exiled tyrants, thou breathest but a breath in the name of the Lord of Justice for the cause of the oppressor and against the rights of the oppressed.' With that I left him; and now —"

"Ay, now, now what will happen? Excommunication! In the metropolis of the Church, too; the superstition of the people! Oh, Cola!"

"If," muttered Rienzi, "my conscience condemned me of one crime; if I had stained my hands in one just man's blood; if I had broken one law I myself had framed; if I had taken bribes, or wronged the poor, or scorned the orphan, or shut my heart to the widow, — then, then — But no! Lord, *thou* wilt not desert me!"

"But *man* may!" thought Nina, mournfully, as she perceived that one of Rienzi's dark fits of fanatical and mystical revery was growing over him, — fits which he suffered no liv-

ing eye, not even Nina's, to witness when they gathered to their height. And now, indeed, after a short interval of muttered soliloquy, in which his face worked so that the veins on his temples swelled like cords, he abruptly left the room and sought the private oratory connected with his closet. Over the emotions there indulged let us draw the veil. Who shall describe those awful and mysterious moments when man, with all his fiery passions, turbulent thoughts, wild hopes, and despondent fears, demands the solitary audience of his Maker?

It was long after this conference with Nina, and the midnight bell had long tolled, when Rienzi stood alone, upon one of the balconies of the palace, to cool, in the starry air, the fever that yet lingered on his exhausted frame. The night was exceedingly calm, the air clear, but chill, for it was now December. He gazed intently upon those solemn orbs to which our wild credulity has referred the prophecies of our doom.

"Vain science!" thought the Tribune, "and gloomy fantasy, that man's fate is pre-ordained, irrevocable, unchangeable, from the moment of his birth! Yet were the dream not baseless, fain would I know which of yon stately lights is my natal star, — which images, which reflects, my career in life, and the memory I shall leave in death." As this thought crossed him, and his gaze was still fixed above, he saw, as if made suddenly more distinct than the stars around it, that rapid and fiery comet which in the winter of 1347 dismayed the superstitions of those who recognized in the stranger of the heavens the omen of disaster and of woe. He recoiled as it met his eye, and muttered to himself: "Is such indeed my type? Or if the legendary lore speak true, and these strange fires portend nations ruined and rulers overthrown, does it foretell my fate? I will think no more."[1] As his eyes fell, they rested upon the colossal Lion of Basalt in the place below, the starlight investing its gray and towering form with a more ghostly whiteness; and then it was that he perceived two figures in

[1] Alas! if by the Romans associated with the fall of Rienzi, that comet was by the rest of Europe connected with the more dire calamity of the Great Plague that so soon afterwards ensued.

black robes lingering by the pedestal which supported the statue, and apparently engaged in some occupation which he could not guess. A fear shot through his veins, for he had never been able to divest himself of the vague idea that there was some solemn and appointed connection between his fate and that old Lion of Basalt. Somewhat relieved, he heard his sentry challenge the intruders; and as they came forward to the light, he perceived that they wore the garments of monks.

"Molest us not, son," said one of them to the sentry. "By order of the Legate of the Holy Father we affix to this public monument of justice and of wrath the bull of excommunication against a heretic and rebel. WOE TO THE ACCURSED OF THE CHURCH!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE FALL OF THE TEMPLE.

IT was as a thunderbolt in a serene day, — the reverse of the Tribune in the zenith of his power, in the abasement of his foe, when with but a handful of brave Romans, determined to be free, he might have crushed forever the antagonist power to the Roman liberties, have secured the rights of his country, and filled up the measures of his own renown. Such a reverse was the very mockery of Fate, who bore him through disaster, to abandon him in the sunniest noon of his prosperity.

The next morning not a soul was to be seen in the streets; the shops were shut, the churches closed: the city was as under an interdict. The awful curse of the papal excommunication upon the chief magistrate of the Pontifical city seemed to freeze up all the arteries of life. The Legate himself, affecting fear of his life, had fled to Monte Fiascone, where he was joined by the Barons immediately after the publication of the edict. The curse worked best in the absence of the execrator.

Towards evening a few persons might be seen traversing the broad space of the Capitol, crossing themselves as the bull, placarded on the Lion, met their eyes, and disappearing within the doors of the great palace. By and by a few anxious groups collected in the streets, but they soon dispersed. It was a paralysis of all intercourse and commune. That spiritual and unarmed authority, which, like the invisible hand of God, desolated the market-place and humbled the crowned head, no physical force could rally against or resist. Yet through the universal awe one conviction touched the multitude, — it was for them that the Tribune was thus blasted in the midst of his glories! The words of the Brand recorded against him on wall and column detailed his offences, — rebellion in asserting the liberties of Rome; heresy in purifying ecclesiastical abuses; and to serve for a miserable covert to the rest, it was sacrilege for bathing in the porphyry vase of Constantine! They felt the conviction, they sighed, they shuddered, and in his vast palace, save a few attached and devoted hearts, the Tribune was alone!

The stanchest of the Tuscan soldiery was gone with Irene. The rest of the force, save a few remaining guards, was the paid Roman militia, composed of citizens, who, long discontented by the delay of their stipends, now seized on the excuse of the excommunication to remain passive, but grumbling, in their homes.

On the third day a new incident broke upon the death-like lethargy of the city: a hundred and fifty mercenaries, with Pepin of Minorbino, a Neapolitan, half noble, half bandit (a creature of Montreal's), at their head, entered the city, seized upon the fortresses of the Colonna, and sent a herald through the city proclaiming, in the name of the Cardinal Legate, the reward of ten thousand florins for the head of Cola di Rienzi.

Then swelled on high, shrill, but not inspiring, as of old, the great bell of the Capitol; the people, listless, disheartened, awed by the spiritual fear of the papal authority (yet greater, in such events, since the removal of the see), came unarmed to the Capitol; and there, by the Place of the Lion, stood the



Tribune. His squires, below the step, held his war-horse, his helm, and the same battle-axe which had blazed in the van of victorious war.

Beside him were a few of his guard, his attendants, and two or three of the principal citizens.

He stood bareheaded and erect, gazing upon the abashed and unarmed crowd with a look of bitter scorn, mingled with deep compassion; and as the bell ceased to toll, and the throng remained hushed and listening, he thus spoke: —

"Ye come, then, once again! Come ye as slaves, or freemen? A handful of armed men are in your walls: will ye who chased from your gates the haughtiest knights, the most practised battle-men of Rome, succumb now to one hundred and fifty hirelings and strangers? Will ye arm for your Tribune? Ye are silent! Be it so. Will you arm for *your own* liberties, — *your own* Rome? Silent still! By the saints that reign on the thrones of the heathen gods, are you thus fallen from your birthright? Have you no arms for your own defence? Romans, hear me! Have I wronged you? If so, by *your* hands let me die; and then, with knives yet reeking with my blood, go forward against the robber who is but the herald of your slavery, and I die honored, grateful, and avenged. You weep! Great God, you weep! Ah! and I could weep, too, that I should live to speak of liberty in vain to Romans. Weep! is this an hour for tears? Weep now; and your tears shall ripen harvests of crime and license and despotism to come! Romans, arm! Follow me at once to the Place of the Colonna; expel this ruffian, expel your enemy (no matter what afterwards you do to me)," — he paused; no ardor was kindled by his words, — "or," he continued, "I abandon you to your fate." There was a long, low, general murmur; at length it became shaped into speech, and many voices cried simultaneously: "The Pope's bull; thou art a man accursed!"

"What!" cried the Tribune; "and is it *ye* who forsake me, — ye for whose cause alone man dares to hurl against me the thunders of his God? Is it not for *you* that I am declared heretic and rebel? What are my imputed crimes? That I

have *made* Rome, and *asserted* Italy to be free; that I have subdued the proud magnates who were the scourge both of Pope and People. And you, — you upbraid me with what I have dared and done for you! Men, *with* you I have fought, *for* you I would have perished. You forsake yourselves in forsaking me; and since I no longer rule over brave men, I resign my power to the tyrant you prefer. Seven months I have ruled over you, — prosperous in commerce, stainless in justice, victorious in the field; I have shown you what Rome could be; and since I abdicate the government ye gave me, when I am gone, strike for your own freedom! It matters nothing who is the chief of a brave and great people. Prove that Rome hath many a Rienzi, but of brighter fortunes."

"I would he had not sought to tax us," said Cecco del Vecchio, who was the very personification of the vulgar feeling, "and that he had beheaded the Barons!"

"Ay!" cried the ex-gravedigger; "but that blessed porphyry vase!"

"And why should we get our throats cut," said Luigi, the butcher, "like my two brothers, Heaven rest them!"

On the face of the general multitude there was a common expression of irresolution and shame; many wept and groaned; none (save the aforesaid grumblers) *accused;* none upbraided, but none seemed disposed to arm. It was one of those listless panics, those strange fits of indifference and lethargy which often seize upon a people who make liberty a matter of impulse and caprice, to whom it has become a catchword, who have not long enjoyed all its rational and sound and practical and blessed results, who have been affrayed by the storms that herald its dawn, — a people such as is common to the South; such as even the North has known; such as, had Cromwell lived a year longer, even England might have seen, — and indeed, in some measure, such a reaction from popular enthusiasm to popular indifference England *did* see when her children madly surrendered the fruits of the bloody war, without reserve, without foresight, to the lewd pensioner of Louis and the royal murderer of Sydney. To such prostration of soul, such blindness of intellect, even the noblest people

will be subjected, when liberty, which should be the growth of ages, spreading its roots through the strata of a thousand customs, is raised, the exotic of an hour, and (like the Tree and Dryad of ancient fable) flourishes and withers with the single spirit that protects it.

"Oh, Heaven, that I were a man!" exclaimed Angelo, who stood behind Rienzi.

"Hear him, hear the boy," cried the Tribune; "out of the mouths of babes speaketh wisdom! He wishes that he were a man, as ye are men, that he might do as ye should do. Mark me! I ride with these faithful few through the quarter of the Colonna, before the fortress of your foe. Three times before that fortress shall my trumpet sound: if at the third blast ye come not, armed as befits ye, — I say not all, but three, but two, but *one* hundred of ye, — I break up my wand of office, and the world shall say one hundred and fifty robbers quelled the soul of Rome and crushed her magistrate and her laws!"

With those words he descended the stairs and mounted his charger; the populace gave way in silence, and their Tribune and his slender train passed slowly on, and gradually vanished from the view of the increasing crowd.

The Romans remained on the place, and after a pause, the demagogue Baroncelli, who saw an opening to his ambition, addressed them. Though not an eloquent nor gifted man, he had the art of uttering the most popular commonplaces. And he knew the weak side of his audience, in their vanity, indolence, and arrogant pride.

"Look you, my masters," said he, leaping up to the Place of the Lion, "the Tribune talks bravely, — he always did; but the monkey used the cat for his chestnuts: he wants to thrust your paws into the fire; you will not be so silly as to let him. The saints bless us! But the Tribune, good man, gets a palace and has banquets, and bathes in a porphyry vase — the more shame on him! — in which San Sylvester christened the Emperor Constantine. All this is worth fighting for; but you, my masters, what do *you* get, except hard blows and a stare at a holiday spectacle? Why, if you beat

these fellows, you will have another tax on the wine: *that* will be *your* reward!"

"Hark!" cried Cecco, "there sounds the trumpet, — a pity he wanted to tax us!"

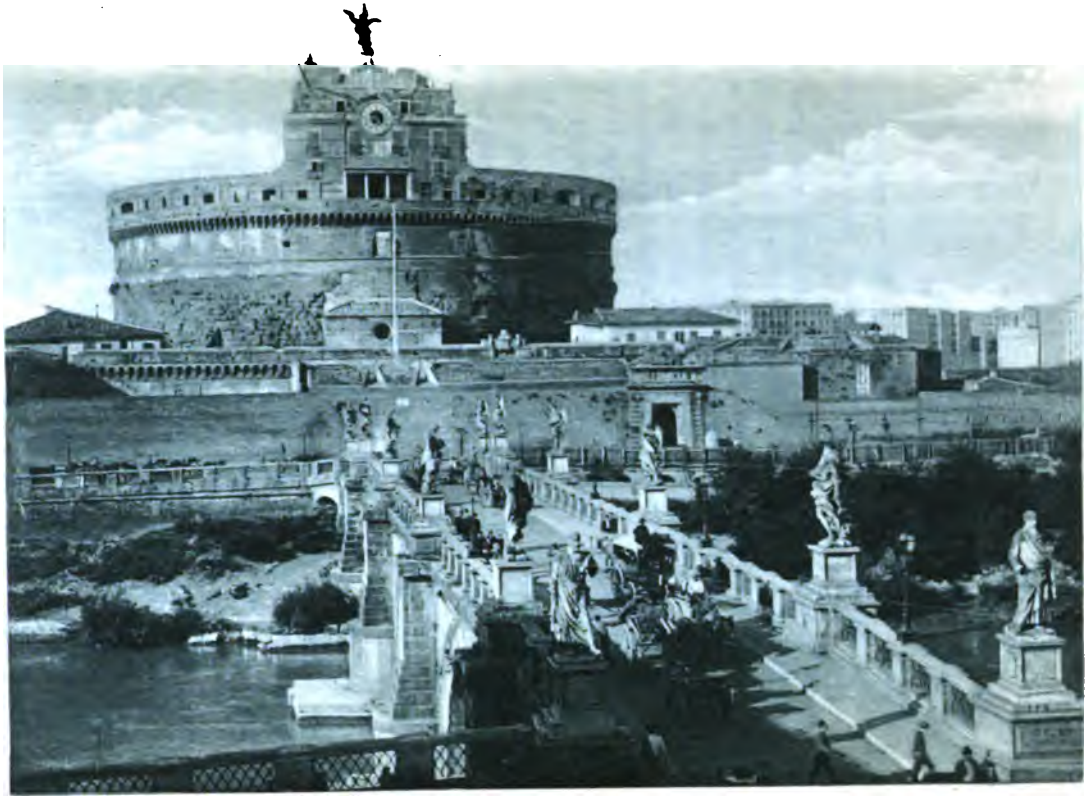
"True," cried Baroncelli, "there sounds the trumpet, — a *silver* trumpet, by the Lord! Next week, if you help him out of the scrape, he 'll have a golden one. But go, — why don't you move, my friends? — 't is but one hundred and fifty mercenaries. True, they are devils to fight, clad in armor from top to toe; but what then? — if they do cut some four or five hundred throats, you 'll beat them at last, and the Tribune will sup the merrier."

"There sounds the second blast," said the butcher. "If my old mother had not lost two of us already, 't is odds but I 'd strike a blow for the bold Tribune."

"You had better put more quicksilver in you," continued Baroncelli, "or you will be too late. And what a pity that will be! If you believe the Tribune, he is the only man that can save Rome. What, you, the finest people in the world, — you not able to save yourselves; you bound up with one man; you not able to dictate to the Colonna and Orsini! Why, who beat the Barons at San Lorenzo? Was it not you? Ah! you got the buffets, and the Tribune the *moneta!* Tush! my friends, let the man go; I warrant there are plenty as good as he to be bought a cheaper bargain. And hark! there is the third blast; it is too late now!"

As the trumpet from the distance sent forth its long and melancholy note, it was as the last warning of the parting genius of the place; and when silence swallowed up the sound, a gloom fell over the whole assembly. They began to regret, to repent, when regret and repentance availed no more. The buffoonery of Baroncelli became suddenly displeasing; and the orator had the mortification of seeing his audience disperse in all directions just as he was about to inform them what great things he himself could do in their behalf.

Meanwhile the Tribune, passing unscathed through the dangerous quarter of the enemy, who, dismayed at his approach, shrank within their fortress, proceeded to the Castle



of St. Angelo, whither Nina had already preceded him, and which he entered to find that proud lady with a smile for his safety, without a tear for his reverse.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SUCCESSORS OF AN UNSUCCESSFUL REVOLUTION — WHO IS TO BLAME, THE FORSAKEN ONE, OR THE FORSAKERS?

CHEERFULLY broke the winter sun over the streets of Rome as the army of the Barons swept along them, the Cardinal Legate at the head, the old Colonna (no longer haughty and erect, but bowed, and broken-hearted at the loss of his sons) at his right hand; the sleek smile of Luca Savelli, the black frown of Rinaldo Orsini, were seen close behind. A long but barbarous array it was, made up chiefly of foreign hirelings; nor did the procession resemble the return of exiled citizens, but the march of invading foes.

"My Lord Colonna," said the Cardinal Legate, a small, withered man, by birth a Frenchman, and full of the bitterest prejudices against the Romans, who had in a former mission very ill received him, as was their wont with foreign ecclesiastics, "this Pepin, whom Montreal has deputed at your orders, hath done us indeed good service."

The old lord bowed, but made no answer. His strong intellect was already broken, and there was dotage in his glassy eye. The Cardinal muttered, "He hears me not; sorrow hath brought him to second childhood!" and looking back, motioned to Luca Savelli to approach.

"Luca," said the Legate, "it was fortunate that the Hungarian's black banner detained the Provençal at Aversa. Had he entered Rome, we might have found Rienzi's successor worse than the Tribune himself. Montreal," he added, with slight emphasis and a curled lip, "is a gentleman and a Frenchman. This Pepin, who is his delegate, we must bribe, or menace to our will."

"Assuredly," answered Savelli, "it is not a difficult task; for Montreal calculated on a more stubborn contest, which he himself would have found leisure to close —"

"As Podesta, or Prince of Rome, — the modest man! We Frenchmen have a due sense of our own merits; but this sudden victory surprises him as it doth us, Luca; and we shall wrest the prey from Pepin ere Montreal can come to his help! But Rienzi must die. He is still, I hear, shut up in St. Angelo. The Orsini shall storm him there ere the day be much older. To-day we possess the Capitol, annul all the rebel's laws, break up his ridiculous parliament, and put all the government of the city under three senators, — Rinaldo Orsini, Colonna, and myself. You, my lord, I trust, we shall fitly provide for."

"Oh! I am rewarded enough by returning to my palace; and a descent on the Jewellers' quarter will soon build up its fortifications. Luca Savelli is not an ambitious man. He wants but to live in peace."

The Cardinal smiled sourly, and took the turn towards the Capitol.

In the front space the usual gapers were assembled. "Make way, make way, knaves!" cried the guards, trampling on either side the crowd, who, accustomed to the sedate and courteous order of Rienzi's guard, fell back too slowly for many of them to escape severe injury from the pikes of the soldiers and the hoofs of the horses. Our friend Luigi the butcher was one of these, and the surliness of the Roman blood was past boiling heat when he received in his ample stomach the blunt end of a German's pike. "There, Roman," said the rude mercenary, in his barbarous attempt at Italian, "make way for your betters; you have had enough crowds and shows of late, in all conscience."

"Betters!" gulped out the poor butcher, "a Roman has no betters; and if I had not lost two brothers by San Lorenzo, I would —"

"The dog is mutinous," said one of the followers of the Orsini, succeeding the German, who had passed on, "and talks of San Lorenzo!"

"Oh!" said another Orsinist, who rode abreast, "I remember him of old. He was one of Rienzi's gang."

"Was he?" said the other, sternly; "then we cannot begin salutary examples too soon;" and, offended at something swaggering and insolent in the butcher's look, the Orsinist coolly thrust him through the heart with his pike, and rode on over his body.

"Shame! shame!" "Murder! murder!" cried the crowd; and they began to press, in the passion of the moment, round the fierce guards.

The Legate heard the cry and saw the rush; he turned pale. "The rascals rebel again!" he faltered.

"No, your Eminence, no," said Luca; "but it may be as well to infuse a wholesome terror. They are all unarmed: let me bid the guards disperse them; a word will do it."

The Cardinal assented, the word was given, and in a few minutes the soldiery, who still smarted under the vindictive memory of defeat from an undisciplined multitude, scattered the crowd down the street without scruple or mercy, riding over some, spearing others, filling the air with shrieks and yells, and strewing the ground with almost as many men as a few days before would have sufficed to have guarded Rome and preserved the constitution! Through this wild, tumultuous scene, and over the bodies of its victims, rode the Legate and his train, to receive in the Hall of the Capitol the allegiance of the citizens and to proclaim the return of the oppressors.

As they dismounted at the stairs, a placard in large letters struck the eye of the Legate. It was placed upon the pedestal of the Lion of Basalt, covering the very place that had been occupied by the bull of excommunication. The words were few, and ran thus:—

"TREMBLE! RIENZI SHALL RETURN!"

"How! what means this mummery?" cried the Legate, trembling already, and looking round to the nobles.

"Please your Eminence," said one of the councillors, who had come from the Capitol to meet the Legate, "we saw it at daybreak, the ink yet moist, as we entered the Hall. We deemed it best to leave it for your Eminence to deal with."

"*You* deemed! Who are *you*, then?"

"One of the members of the Council, your Eminence, and a stanch opponent of the Tribune, as is well known, when he wanted the new tax —"

"Council — trash! No more councils now! Order is restored at last. The Orsini and the Colonna will look to you in future. Resist a tax, did you? Well, that was right when proposed by a tyrant; but *I* warn you, friend, to take care how you resist the tax *we* shall impose. Happy if your city can buy its peace with the Church on any terms, and his Holiness is short of the florins."

The discomfited councillor shrank back.

"Tear off yon insolent placard. Nay, hold! Fix over it our proclamation of ten thousand florins for the heretic's head! *Ten* thousand? Methinks that is too much *now;* we will alter the cipher. Meanwhile Rinaldo Orsini, Lord Senator, march thy soldiers to St. Angelo; let us see if the heretic can stand a siege."

"It needs not, your Eminence," said the councillor, again officiously bustling up; "St. Angelo is surrendered. The Tribune, his wife, and one page escaped last night, it is said, in disguise."

"Ha!" said the old Colonna, whose dulled sense had at length arrived at the conclusion that something extraordinary arrested the progress of his friends. "What is the matter? What is that placard? Will no one tell me the words? My old eyes are dim."

As he uttered the questions, in the shrill and piercing treble of age, a voice replied in a loud and deep tone, — none knew whence it came; the crowd was reduced to a few stragglers, chiefly friars in cowl and serge, whose curiosity nought could daunt, and whose garb insured them safety; the soldiers closed the rear: a voice, I say, came, startling the color from many a cheek, — in answer to the Colonna, saying: —

"TREMBLE! RIENZI SHALL RETURN!"

BOOK VI.

THE PLAGUE.

Erano gli anni della fruttifera Incarnazione del Figliuolo di Dio al numero pervenuti di mille trecento quarant' otto, quando nell' egregia città di Fiorenza oltre ad ogni altra Italica bellissima, pervenne la mortifera pestilenza. — Boccaccio, *Introduzione al Decamerone*.

The years of the fructiferous incarnation of the Son of God had reached the number of one thousand three hundred and forty-eight, when into the illustrious city of Florence, beautiful beyond every other in Italy, entered the death-fraught pestilence. —*Introduction to the Decameron*.

CHAPTER I.

THE RETREAT OF THE LOVER.

By the borders of one of the fairest lakes of Northern Italy stood the favorite mansion of Adrian di Castello, to which in his softer and less patriotic moments his imagination had often and fondly turned; and thither the young nobleman, dismissing his more courtly and distinguished companions in the Neapolitan embassy, retired after his ill-starred return to Rome. Most of those thus dismissed joined the Barons; the young Annibaldi, whose daring and ambitious nature had attached him strongly to the Tribune, maintained a neutral ground; he betook himself to his castle in the Campagna, and did not return to Rome till the expulsion of Rienzi.

The retreat of Irene's lover was one well fitted to feed his melancholy reveries. Without being absolutely a fortress, it was sufficiently strong to resist any assault of the mountain robbers or petty tyrants in the vicinity; while, built by some

former lord from the materials of the half-ruined villas of the ancient Romans, its marbled columns and tessellated pavements relieved with a wild grace the gray stone walls and massive towers of feudal masonry. Rising from a green eminence gently sloping to the lake, the stately pile cast its shadow far and dark over the beautiful waters; by its side, from the high and wooded mountains on the background, broke a waterfall in irregular and sinuous course, now hid by the foliage, now gleaming in the light, and collecting itself at last in a broad basin, beside which a little fountain, inscribed with half-obliterated letters, attested the departed elegance of the classic age, — some memento of lord and poet whose very names were lost; thence descending through mosses and lichen and odorous herbs, a brief, sheeted stream bore its surplus into the lake. And there, amidst the sturdier and bolder foliage of the North, grew, wild and picturesque, many a tree transplanted, in ages back, from the sunnier East, — not blighted nor stunted in that golden clime, which fosters almost every produce of nature as with a mother's care. The place was remote and solitary. The roads that conducted to it from the distant towns were tangled, intricate, mountainous, and beset by robbers. A few cottages and a small convent, a quarter of a league up the verdant margin, were the nearest habitations; and save by some occasional pilgrim or some bewildered traveller, the loneliness of the mansion was rarely invaded. It was precisely the spot which proffered rest to a man weary of the world, and indulged the memories which grow in rank luxuriance over the wrecks of passion. And he whose mind, at once gentle and self-dependent, can endure solitude, might have ransacked all earth for a more fair and undisturbed retreat.

But not to such a solitude had the earlier dreams of Adrian dedicated the place. Here, had he thought, should one bright being have presided; here should love have found its haven; and hither, when love at length admitted of intrusion, hither might wealth and congenial culture have invited all the gentler and better spirits which had begun to move over the troubled face of Italy, promising a second and younger empire of poesy and lore and art. To the graceful and romantic, but some-

what pensive and inert, temperament of the young noble, more adapted to the calm and civilized than stormy and barbarous times, ambition proffered no reward so grateful as lettered leisure and intellectual repose. His youth colored by the influence of Petrarch, his manhood had dreamed of a happier Vaucluse, not untenanted by a Laura. The visions which had connected the scene with the image of Irene made the place still haunted by her shade; and time and absence, only ministering to his impassioned meditations, deepened his melancholy and increased his love.

In this lone retreat, which even in describing from memory,— for these eyes have seen, these feet have trodden, this heart yet yearneth for, the spot — which even, I say, in thus describing, seems to me (and haply also to the gentle reader) a grateful and welcome transit from the storms of action and the vicissitudes of ambition, so long engrossing the narrative, — in this lone retreat Adrian passed the winter, which visits with so mild a change that intoxicating clime. The roar of the world without was borne but in faint and indistinct murmurings to his ear. He learned only imperfectly, and with many contradictions, the news which broke like a thunderbolt over Italy, that the singular and aspiring man — himself a revolution — who had excited the interest of all Europe, the brightest hopes of the enthusiastic, the profusest adulation of the great, the deepest terror of the despot, the wildest aspirations of all free spirits, had been suddenly stricken from his state, his name branded and his head proscribed. This event, which happened at the end of December, reached Adrian, through a wandering pilgrim, at the commencement of March, somewhat more than two months after the date, — the March of that awful year 1348, which saw Europe, and Italy especially, desolated by the direst pestilence which history has recorded, accursed alike by the numbers and the celebrity of its victims, and yet strangely connected with some not unpleasing images by the grace of Boccaccio and the eloquence of Petrarch.

The pilgrim who informed Adrian of the Revolution at Rome was unable to give him any clew to the present fate of Rienzi or his family. It was only known that the Tribune and his wife

had escaped, none knew whither; many guessed that they were already dead, — victims to the numerous robbers who immediately on the fall of the Tribune settled back to their former habits, sparing neither age nor sex, wealth nor poverty. As all relating to the ex-Tribune was matter of eager interest, the pilgrim had also learned that, previous to the fall of Rienzi, his sister had left Rome, but it was not known to what place she had been conveyed.

The news utterly roused Adrian from his dreaming life. Irene was then in the condition his letter dared to picture, — severed from her brother, fallen from her rank, desolate and friendless. "Now," said the generous and high-hearted lover, "she may be mine without a disgrace to my name. Whatever Rienzi's faults, she is not implicated in them. *Her* hands are not red with my kinsman's blood, nor can men say that Adrian di Castello allies himself with a House whose power is built upon the ruins of the Colonna. The Colonna are restored, — again triumphant; Rienzi is nothing: distress and misfortune unite me at once to her on whom they fall!"

But how were these romantic resolutions to be executed, Irene's dwelling-place unknown? He resolved himself to repair to Rome and make the necessary inquiries; accordingly, he summoned his retainers, — blithe tidings to them, those of travel! The mail left the armory, the banner the hall, and after two days of animated bustle, the fountain by which Adrian had passed so many hours of revery was haunted only by the birds of the returning spring, and the nightly lamp no longer cast its solitary ray from his turret-chamber over the bosom of the deserted lake.

CHAPTER II.

THE SEEKER.

It was a bright, oppressive, sultry morning, when a solitary horseman was seen winding that unequalled road, from whose height, amidst fig-trees, vines, and olives, the traveller beholds gradually break upon his gaze the enchanting valley of the Arno, and the spires and domes of Florence. But not with the traveller's customary eye of admiration and delight passed that solitary horseman, and not upon the usual activity and mirth and animation of the Tuscan life broke that noonday sun. All was silent, void and hushed, and even in the light of heaven there seemed a sicklied and ghastly glare. The cottages by the roadside were some shut up and closed, some open, but seemingly inmateless. The plough stood still, the distaff plied not; horse and man had a dreary holiday. There was a darker curse upon the land than the curse of Cain! Now and then a single figure, usually clad in the gloomy robe of a friar, crossed the road, lifting towards the traveller a livid and amazed stare, and then hurried on, and vanished beneath some roof, whence issued a faint and dying moan, which but for the exceeding stillness around could scarcely have pierced the threshold. As the traveller neared the city, the scene became less solitary, yet more dread. There might be seen carts and litters, thick awnings wrapped closely round them, containing those who sought safety in flight, forgetful that the Plague was everywhere! And while these gloomy vehicles, conducted by horses, gaunt, shadowy skeletons, crawling heavily along, passed by, like hearses of the dead, sometimes a cry burst the silence in which they moved, and the traveller's steed started aside as some wretch, on whom the disease had broken forth, was dropped from the vehicle by the selfish inhumanity of his comrades and left to perish by the way. Hard by the gate a wagon paused, and a man with a mask

threw out its contents in a green slimy ditch that bordered the road. These were garments and robes of all kind and value, — the broidered mantle of the gallant, the hood and veil of my lady, and the rags of the peasant. While glancing at the labor of the masker, the cavalier beheld a herd of swine, gaunt and half famished, run to the spot, in the hopes of food; and the traveller shuddered to think *what* food they might have anticipated! But ere he reached the gate, those of the animals that had been busiest rooting at the infectious heap dropped down dead amongst their fellows.[1]

"Ho, ho," said the masker, — and his hollow voice sounded yet more hollow through his vizard, — "comest thou here to die, stranger? See, thy brave mantle of triple-pile and golden broidery will not save thee from the *gavocciolo*.[2] Ride on, ride on, — to-day fit morsel for thy lady's kiss; to-morrow too foul for the rat and worm!"

Replying not to this hideous welcome, Adrian, for it was he, pursued his way. The gates stood wide open: this was the most appalling sign of all; for at first the most jealous precaution had been taken against the ingress of strangers. Now all care, all foresight, all vigilance, were vain. And thrice nine warders had died at that single post, and the officers to appoint their successors were dead too! Law and Police, and the Tribunals of Health, and the Boards of Safety, Death had stopped them all! And the Plague killed art itself, social union, the harmony and mechanism of civilization, as if they had been bone and flesh!

So, mute and solitary, went on the lover in his quest of love, resolved to find and to save his betrothed, and guided (that faithful and loyal knight!) through the Wilderness of Horror by the blessed hope of that strange passion, noblest of all when noble, basest of all when base! He came into a broad and spacious square lined with palaces, — the usual haunt of the best and most graceful nobility of Italy. The stranger was alone now, and the tramp of his gallant steed sounded ghastly and fearful in his own ears, when just as he turned

[1] The same spectacle greeted, and is recorded by, Boccaccio.

[2] The tumor that made the fatal symptom.

the corner of one of the streets that led from it, he saw a woman steal forth with a child in her arms, while another, yet in infancy, clung to her robe. She held a large bunch of flowers to her nostrils (the fancied and favorite mode to prevent infection), and muttered to the children, who were moaning with hunger: "Yes, yes, you shall have food! Plenty of food now for the stirring forth. But oh, *that stirring forth!*" and she peered about and round, lest any of the diseased might be near.

"My friend," said he, "can you direct me to the convent of —"

"Away, man, away!" shrieked the woman.

"Alas!" said Adrian, with a mournful smile, "can you not see that I am not, as yet, one to *spread* contagion?"

But the woman, unheeding him, fled on; when, after a few paces, she was arrested by the child that clung to her.

"Mother, mother!" it cried, "I am sick, I cannot stir."

The woman halted, tore aside the child's robe, saw under the arm the fatal tumor, and, deserting her own flesh, fled with a shriek along the square. The shriek rang long in Adrian's ears, though not aware of the unnatural cause, — the *mother feared not for her infant, but herself.* The voice of Nature was no more heeded in that charnel city than it is in the tomb itself! Adrian rode on at a brisker pace, and came at length before a stately church; its doors were wide open, and he saw within a company of monks (the church had no other worshippers, and they were masked) gathered round the altar and chanting the *Miserere Domine:* the ministers of God, in a city hitherto boasting the devoutest population in Italy, without a flock!

The young Cavalier paused before the door and waited till the service was done, and the monks descended the steps into the street.

"Holy fathers," said he then, "may I pray your goodness to tell me my nearest way to the convent Santa Maria de' Pazzi?"

"Son," said one of these featureless spectres, — for so they seemed, in their shroud-like robes and uncouth vizards, —

"son, pass on your way, and God be with you! Robbers or revellers may now fill the holy cloisters you speak of. The abbess is dead, and many a sister sleeps with her; and the nuns have fled from the contagion."

Adrian half fell from his horse, and as he still remained rooted to the spot, the dark procession swept on, hymning in solemn dirge through the desolate street the monastic chant, —

"By the Mother and the Son,
Death endured and mercy won,
Spare us, sinners though we be, —
Miserere Domine!"

Recovering from his stupor, Adrian regained the brethren, and, as they closed the burden of their song, again accosted them, —

"Holy fathers, dismiss me not thus! Perchance the one I seek may yet be heard of at the convent. Tell me which way to shape my course."

"Disturb us not, son," said the monk who spoke before. "It is an ill omen for thee to break thus upon the invocations of the ministers of Heaven."

"Pardon, pardon! I will do ample penance, pay many masses; but I seek a dear friend, — the way, the way —"

"To the right, till you gain the first bridge. Beyond the third bridge, on the river side, you will find the convent," said another monk, moved by the earnestness of Adrian.

"Bless you, holy father!" faltered forth the Cavalier, and spurred his steed in the direction given. The friars heeded him not, but again resumed their dirge. Mingled with the sound of his horse's hoofs on the clattering pavement, came to the rider's ear the imploring line, —

"*Miserere Domine!*"

Impatient, sick at heart, desperate, Adrian flew through the street at the full speed of his horse. He passed the market-place, — it was empty as the desert, — the gloomy and barricaded streets in which the counter-cries of Guelf and Ghibeline had so often cheered on the chivalry and rank of Florence.



Now huddled together in vault and pit lay Guelf and Ghibeline, knightly spurs and beggar's crutch. To that silence the roar even of civil strife would have been a blessing! The first bridge, the river side, the second, the third bridge, all were gained, and Adrian at last reined his steed before the walls of the convent. He fastened his steed to the porch, in which the door stood ajar, half torn from its hinges, traversed the court, gained the opposite door that admitted to the main building, came to the jealous grating, now no more a barrier from the profane world, and as he there paused a moment to recover breath and nerve, wild laughter and loud song, interrupted and mixed with oaths, startled his ear. He pushed aside the grated door, entered, and, led by the sounds, came to the refectory. In that meeting-place of the severe and mortified maids of Heaven he now beheld gathered round the upper table, used of yore by the abbess, a strange, disorderly, ruffian herd, who at first glance seemed indeed of all ranks, for some wore serge, or even rags, others were tricked out in all the bravery of satin and velvet, plume and mantle. But a second glance sufficed to indicate that the companions were much of the same degree, and that the finery of the more showy was but the spoil rent from unguarded palaces or tenantless bazaars; for under plumed hats, looped with jewels, were grim, unwashed, unshaven faces, over which hung the long locks which the professed brethren of the sharp knife and hireling arm had just begun to assume, serving them often instead of a mask. Amidst these savage revellers were many women, young and middle-aged, foul and fair; and Adrian piously shuddered to see amongst the loose robes and uncovered necks of the professional harlots the saintly habit and beaded rosary of nuns. Flasks of wine, ample viands, gold and silver vessels, mostly consecrated to holy rites, strewed the board. As the young Roman paused, spell-bound, at the threshold, the man who acted as president of the revel, a huge, swarthy ruffian, with a deep scar over his face, which, traversing the whole of the left cheek and upper lip, gave his large features an aspect preternaturally hideous, called out to him, —

"Come in, man, come in! Why stand you there amazed

and dumb? We are hospitable revellers, and give all men welcome. Here are wine and women, — my Lord Bishop's wine, and my Lady Abbess's women!

"Sing hey! sing ho! for the royal DEATH,
That scatters a host with a single breath;
That opens the prison to spoil the palace,
And rids honest necks from the hangman's malice.
Here 's a health to the Plague! Let the mighty ones dread:
The poor never liv'd till the wealthy were dead.
A health to the Plague! may she ever, as now,
Loose the rogue from his chain, and the nun from her vow.
To the jailer a sword, to the captive a key,
Hurrah for Earth's Curse, 't is a blessing to me!"

Ere this fearful stave was concluded, Adrian, sensible that in such orgies there was no chance of prosecuting his inquiries, left the desecrated chamber and fled, scarcely drawing breath, so great was the terror that seized him, till he stood once more in the court amidst the hot, sickly, stagnant sunlight that seemed a fit atmosphere for the scenes on which it fell. He resolved, however, not to desert the place without making another effort of inquiry; and while he stood without the court, musing and doubtful, he saw a small chapel hard by, through whose long casement gleamed faintly, and dimmed by the noon-day, the light of tapers. He turned towards its porch, entered, and saw beside the sanctuary a single nun kneeling in prayer. In the narrow aisle, upon a long table (at either end of which burned the tall dismal tapers whose rays had attracted him), the drapery of several shrouds showed him the half-distinct outline of human figures hushed in death. Adrian himself, impressed by the sadness and sanctity of the place, and the touching sight of that solitary and unselfish watcher of the dead, knelt down and intensely prayed.

As he rose, somewhat relieved from the burden at his heart, the nun rose also, and started to perceive him.

"Unhappy man!" said she, in a voice which, low, faint, and solemn, sounded as a ghost's, "what fatality brings thee hither? Seest thou not thou art in the presence of clay which the Plague hath touched, — thou breathest the air which destroys?

Hence! and search throughout all the desolation for one spot where the Dark Visitor hath not come!"

"Holy maiden," answered Adrian, "the danger you hazard does not appal me; I seek one whose life is dearer than my own."

"Thou needest say no more to tell me thou art newly come to Florence! Here son forsakes his father, and mother deserts her child. When life is most hopeless, these worms of a day cling to it as if it were the salvation of immortality! But for me alone death has no horror. Long severed from the world, I have seen my sisterhood perish, the house of God desecrated, its altar overthrown, and I care not to survive, — the last whom the Pestilence leaves at once unperjured and alive."

The nun paused a few moments, and then, looking earnestly at the healthful countenance and unbroken frame of Adrian, sighed heavily. "Stranger, why fly you not?" she said. "Thou mightest as well search the crowded vaults and rotten corruption of the dead, as search the city for one living."

"Sister and bride of the blessed Redeemer!" returned the Roman, clasping his hands, "one word I implore thee. Thou art, methinks, of the sisterhood of yon dismantled convent: tell me, knowest thou if Irene di Gabrini[1] — guest of the late Abbess, sister of the fallen Tribune of Rome — be yet amongst the living?"

"Art thou her brother, then?" said the nun. "Art thou that fallen Sun of the Morning?"

"I am her betrothed," replied Adrian, sadly. "Speak."

"O flesh! flesh! how art thou victor to the last, even amidst the triumphs and in the lazar-house of corruption!" said the nun. "Vain man, think not of such carnal ties; make thy peace with Heaven, for thy days are surely numbered!"

"Woman," cried Adrian, impatiently, "talk not to me of myself, nor rail against ties whose holiness thou canst not know! I ask thee again, as thou thyself hopest for mercy and for pardon, is Irene living?"

The nun was awed by the energy of the young lover, and

[1] The family name of Rienzi was Gabrini.

after a moment, which seemed to him an age of agonized suspense, she replied, —

"The maiden thou speakest of died not with the general death. In the dispersion of the few remaining she left the convent, I know not whither; but she had friends in Florence: their names I cannot tell thee."

"Now bless thee, holy sister! bless thee! How long since she left the convent?"

"Four days have passed since the robber and the harlot have seized the house of Santa Maria," replied the nun, groaning; "and they were quick successors to the sisterhood."

"Four days! And thou canst give me no clew?"

"None, — yet stay, young man!" and the nun, approaching, lowered her voice to a hissing whisper: "Ask the *Becchini.*"[1]

Adrian started aside, crossed himself hastily, and quitted the convent without answer. He returned to his horse, and rode back into the silenced heart of the city. Tavern and hotel there were no more; but the palaces of dead princes were free to the living stranger. He entered one, — a spacious and splendid mansion. In the stables he found forage still in the manger; but the horses — at that time in the Italian cities a proof of rank as well as wealth — were gone, with the hands that fed them. The high-born Knight assumed the office of groom, took off the heavy harness, fastened his steed to the rack, and as the wearied animal, unconscious of the surrounding horrors, fell eagerly upon its meal, its young lord turned away and muttered: "Faithful servant and sole companion! may the Pestilence, that spareth neither beast nor man, spare thee, and mayst thou bear me hence with a lighter heart!"

A spacious hall hung with arms and banners, a wide flight of marble stairs, whose walls were painted in the stiff outlines and gorgeous colors of the day, conducted to vast chambers hung with velvets and cloth of gold, but silent as the tomb.

[1] According to the usual custom of Florence, the dead were borne to their resting-place on biers, supported by citizens of equal rank; but a new trade was created by the Plague, and men of the lowest dregs of the populace, bribed by immense payment, discharged the office of transporting the remains of the victims. These were called *Becchini*.

He threw himself upon the cushions which were piled in the centre of the room, for he had ridden far that morning and for many days before, and he was wearied and exhausted, body and limb; but he could not rest. Impatience, anxiety, hope, and fear gnawed his heart and fevered his veins, and after a brief and unsatisfactory attempt to sober his own thoughts and devise some plan of search more certain than that which chance might afford him, he rose and traversed the apartments, in the unacknowledged hope which chance alone could suggest.

It was easy to see that he had made his resting-place in the home of one of the princes of the land; and the splendor of all around him far outshone the barbarous and rude magnificence of the less civilized and wealthy Romans. Here lay the lute as last touched, the gilded and illumined volume as last conned; there were seats drawn familiarly together, as when lady and gallant had interchanged whispers last.

"And such," thought Adrian, "such desolation may soon swallow up the vestige of the unwelcomed guest, as of the vanished lord!"

At length he entered a saloon, in which was a table still spread with wine-flasks, goblets of glass and one of silver, withered flowers, half-mouldy fruits, and viands. At one side the arras, folding-doors opened to a broad flight of stairs that descended to a little garden at the back of the house, in which a fountain still played sparkling and livingly, — the only thing, save the stranger, living there! On the steps lay a crimson mantle, and by it a lady's glove. The relics seemed to speak to the lover's heart of a lover's last wooing and last farewell. He groaned aloud, and feeling he should have need of all his strength, filled one of the goblets from a half-emptied flask of Cyprus wine. He drained the draught; it revived him. "Now," he said, "once more to my task! I will sally forth," when suddenly he heard heavy steps along the rooms he had quitted. They approached, they entered; and Adrian beheld two huge and ill-omened forms stalk into the chamber. They were wrapped in black, homely draperies, their arms were bare, and they wore large shapeless masks, which descended to the breast, leaving only access to sight and breath in three small

and circular apertures. The Colonna half drew his sword, for the forms and aspects of these visitors were not such as men think to look upon in safety.

"Oh!" said one, "the palace has a new guest to-day. Fear us not, stranger; there is room, — ay, and wealth enough for all men now in Florence! *Per Bacco!* but there is still one goblet of silver left: how comes that?" So saying, the man seized the cup which Adrian had just drained, and thrust it into his breast. He then turned to Adrian, whose hand was still upon his hilt, and said, with a laugh which came choked and muffled through his vizard: "Oh! we cut no throats, Signor; the Invisible spares us that trouble. We are honest men, state officers, and come but to see if the cart should halt here to-night."

"Ye are then —"

"Becchini!"

Adrian's blood ran cold. The Becchino continued: "And keep you this house while you rest at Florence, Signor?"

"Yes, if the rightful lord claim it not."

"Ha! ha! 'Rightful lord!' The Plague is lord of all now! Why, I have known three gallant companies tenant this palace the last week, and have buried them all — all! It is a pleasant house enough, and gives good custom. Are you alone?"

"At present, yes."

"Show us where you sleep, that we may know where to come for you. You won't want us these three days, I see."

"Ye are pleasant welcomers!" said Adrian; "but listen to me. Can ye find the living as well as bury the dead? I seek one in this city who, if you discover her, shall be worth to you a year of burials."

"No, no! that is out of our line. As well look for a dropped sand on the beach as for a living being amongst closed houses and yawning vaults; but if you will pay the poor gravediggers beforehand, I promise you, you shall have the first of a new charnel-house, — it will be finished just about your time."

"There," said Adrian, flinging the wretches a few pieces of gold, "there! and if you would do me a kinder service,

leave me, at least while living; or I may save you that trouble." And he turned from the room.

The Becchino who had been spokesman followed him. "You are generous, Signor, stay: you will want fresher food than these filthy fragments. I will supply thee of the best while — while thou wantest it. And hark! whom wishest thou that I should seek?"

This question arrested Adrian's departure. He detailed the name and all the particulars he could suggest of Irene, and with sickened heart described the hair, features, and stature of that lovely and hallowed image, which might furnish a theme to the poet, and now gave a clew to the gravedigger.

The unhallowed apparition shook his head when Adrian had concluded. "Full five hundred such descriptions did I hear in the first days of the Plague, when there were still such things as mistress and lover; but it is a dainty catalogue, Signor, and it will be a pride to the poor Becchino to discover or even to bury so many charms! I will do my best; meanwhile I can recommend you, if in a hurry, to make the best of your time, to many a pretty face and comely shape —"

"Out, fiend!" muttered Adrian; "fool to waste time with such as thou!"

The laugh of the gravedigger followed his steps.

All that day did Adrian wander through the city; but search and question were alike unavailing. All whom he encountered and interrogated seemed to regard him as a madman, and these were indeed of no kind likely to advance his object. Wild troops of disordered, drunken revellers, processions of monks, or, here and there, scattered individuals gliding rapidly along, and shunning all approach or speech, made the only haunters of the dismal streets, till the sun sank, lurid and yellow, behind the hills, and darkness closed around the noiseless pathway of the Pestilence.

CHAPTER III.

FLOWERS AMIDST THE TOMBS.

ADRIAN found that the Becchino had taken care that famine should not forestall the Plague; the banquet of the dead was removed, and fresh viands and wines of all kinds — for there was plenty then in Florence! — spread the table. He partook of the refreshment, though but sparingly; and shrinking from repose in beds beneath whose gorgeous hangings Death had been so lately busy, carefully closed door and window, wrapped himself in his mantle, and found his resting-place on the cushions of the chamber in which he had supped. Fatigue cast him into an unquiet slumber, from which he was suddenly awakened by the roll of a cart below, and the jingle of bells. He listened, as the cart proceeded slowly from door to door, and at length its sound died away in the distance. He slept no more that night!

The sun had not long risen ere he renewed his labors; and it was yet early when, just as he passed a church, two ladies richly dressed came from the porch, and seemed through their vizards to regard the young Cavalier with earnest attention. The gaze arrested him also, when one of the ladies said, "Fair sir, you are over-bold: you wear no mask, neither do you smell to flowers."

"Lady, I wear no mask, for I would be seen; I search these miserable places for one in whose life I live."

"He is young, comely, evidently noble, and the Plague hath not touched him: he will serve our purpose well," whispered one of the ladies to the other.

"You echo my own thoughts," returned her companion; and then, turning to Adrian, she said, "You seek one you are not wedded to, if you seek so fondly."

"It is true."

"Young and fair, with dark hair and neck of snow: I will conduct you to her."

"Signora!"

"Follow us!"

"Know you who I am, and whom I seek?"

"Yes."

"Can you in truth tell me aught of Irene?"

"I can; follow me."

"To her?"

"Yes, yes; follow us!"

The ladies moved on, as if impatient of further parley. Amazed, doubtful, and as if in a dream, Adrian followed them. Their dress, manner, and the pure Tuscan of the one who had addressed him, indicated them of birth and station; but all else was a riddle which he could not solve.

They arrived at one of the bridges, where a litter and a servant on horseback, holding a palfrey by the bridle, were in attendance. The ladies entered the litter, and she who had before spoken, bade Adrian follow on the palfrey.

"But tell me —" he began.

"No questions, Cavalier," said she, impatiently; "follow the living in silence, or remain with the dead, as you list."

With that the litter proceeded; and Adrian mounted the palfrey wonderingly, and followed his strange conductors, who moved on at a tolerably brisk pace. They crossed the bridge, left the river on one side, and, soon ascending a gentle acclivity, the trees and flowers of the country began to succeed dull walls and empty streets. After proceeding thus somewhat less than half an hour, they turned up a green lane remote from the road, and came suddenly upon the porticos of a fair and stately palace. Here the ladies descended from their litter; and Adrian, who had vainly sought to extract speech from the attendant, also dismounted, and following them across a spacious court, filled on either side with vases of flowers and orange-trees, and then through a wide hall in the farther side of the quadrangle, found himself in one of the loveliest spots eye ever saw or poet ever sang. It was a garden plot of the most emerald verdure. Bouquets of laurel and of

myrtle opened on either side into vistas half overhung with clematis and rose, through whose arcades the prospect closed with statues and gushing fountains; in front, the lawn was bounded by rows of vases on marble pedestals filled with flowers; and broad and gradual flights of steps of the whitest marble led from terrace to terrace, each adorned with statues and fountains, half way down a high but softly sloping and verdant hill. Beyond, spread in wide, various, and luxurious landscape the vineyards and olive-groves, the villas and villages, of the Vale of Arno, intersected by the silver river, while the city, in all its calm, but without its horror, raised its roofs and spires to the sun. Birds of every hue and song, some free, some in network of golden wire, warbled round; and upon the centre of the sward reclined four ladies, unmasked and richly dressed, the eldest of whom seemed scarcely more than twenty, and five cavaliers, young and handsome, whose jewelled vests and golden chains attested their degree. Wines and fruits were on a low table beside; and musical instruments, chess-boards, and gammon-tables lay scattered all about. So fair a group and so graceful a scene, Adrian never beheld but once, and that was in the midst of the ghastly pestilence of Italy; such group and such scene our closet indolence may yet revive in the pages of the bright Boccaccio!

On seeing Adrian and his companions approach, the party rose instantly; and one of the ladies, who wore upon her head a wreath of laurel-leaves, stepping before the rest, exclaimed: "Well done, my Mariana! Welcome back, my fair subjects. And you, sir, welcome hither."

The two guides of the Colonna had by this time removed their masks; and the one who had accosted him, shaking her long and raven ringlets over a bright, laughing eye and a cheek to whose native olive now rose a slight blush, turned to him ere he could reply to the welcome he had received.

"Signor Cavalier," said she, "you now see to what I have decoyed you. Own that this is pleasanter than the sights and sounds of the city we have left. You gaze on me in surprise. See, my Queen, how speechless the marvel of your court has

made our new gallant; I assure you he could talk quickly enough when he had only us to confer with, — nay, I was forced to impose silence on him."

"Oh! then you have not yet informed him of the custom and origin of the court he enters?" quoth she of the laurel-wreath.

"No, my Queen; I thought all description given in such a spot as our poor Florence now is, would fail of its object. My task is done; I resign him to your Grace!"

So saying, the lady tripped lightly away, and began coquettishly sleeking her locks in the smooth mirror of a marble basin, whose waters trickled over the margin upon the grass below, ever and anon glancing archly towards the stranger, and sufficiently at hand to overhear all that was said.

"In the first place, Signor, permit us to inquire," said the lady who bore the appellation of Queen, "thy name, rank, and birthplace."

"Madam," returned Adrian, "I came hither little dreaming to answer questions respecting myself; but what it pleases you to ask, it must please me to reply to. My name is Adrian di Castello, one of the Roman house of the Colonna."

"A noble column of a noble house!" answered the Queen. "For us, respecting whom your curiosity may perhaps be aroused, know that we six ladies of Florence, deserted by or deprived of our kin and protectors, formed the resolution to retire to this palace, where, if death comes, it comes stripped of half its horrors; and as the learned tell us that sadness engenders the awful malady, so you see us sworn foes to sadness. Six cavaliers of our acquaintance agreed to join us. We pass our days, whether many or few, in whatever diversions we can find or invent. Music and the dance, merry tales and lively songs, with such slight change of scene as from sward to shade, from alley to fountain, fill up our time and prepare us for peaceful sleep and happy dreams. Each lady is by turns Queen of our fairy court, as is my lot this day. One law forms the code of our constitution, — that nothing sad shall be admitted. We would live as if yonder city were not, and as if (added the fair Queen, with a slight sigh)

youth, grace, and beauty could endure forever. One of our knights madly left us for a day, promising to return; we have seen him no more: we will not guess what hath chanced to him. It became necessary to fill up his place; we drew lots who should seek his substitute; it fell upon the ladies who have — not, I trust, to your displeasure — brought you hither. Fair sir, my explanation is made."

"Alas, lovely Queen," said Adrian, wrestling strongly, but vainly, with the bitter disappointment he felt, "I cannot be one of your happy circle; I am in myself a violation of your law. I am filled with but one sad and anxious thought, to which all mirth would seem impiety. I am a seeker amongst the living and the dead for one being of whose fate I am uncertain: and it was only by the words that fell from my fair conductor that I have been decoyed hither from my mournful task. Suffer me, gracious lady, to return to Florence."

The Queen looked in mute vexation towards the dark-eyed Mariana, who returned the glance by one equally expressive; and then suddenly stepping up to Adrian she said, —

"But, Signor, if I should still keep my promise, if I should be able to satisfy thee of the health and safety of — of Irene?"

"Irene?" echoed Adrian in surprise, forgetful at the moment that he had before revealed the name of her he sought — "Irene — Irene di Gabrini, sister of the once-renowned Rienzi?"

"The same," replied Mariana, quickly; "I knew her, as I told you. Nay, Signor, I do not deceive thee. It is true that I cannot bring thee to her; but better as it is. She went away many days ago to one of the towns of Lombardy, which, they say, the Pestilence has not yet pierced. Now, noble sir, is not your heart lightened, and will you so soon be a deserter from the Court of Loveliness, and perhaps," she added, with a soft look from her large dark eyes, "of Love?"

"Dare I, in truth, believe you, lady?" said Adrian, all delighted, yet still half doubting.

"Would I deceive a true lover, as methinks you are? Be assured. Nay, Queen, receive your subject."

The Queen extended her hand to Adrian, and led him to the group that still stood on the grass at a little distance. They welcomed him as a brother, and soon forgave his abstracted courtesies, in compliment to his good mien and illustrious name.

The Queen clapped her hands, and the party again ranged themselves on the sward, each lady beside each gallant. "You, Mariana, if not fatigued," said the Queen, "shall take the lute and silence these noisy grasshoppers, which chirp about us with as much pretension as if they were nightingales. Sing, sweet subject, sing; and let it be the song our dear friend, Signor Visdomini,[1] made for a kind of inaugural anthem to such as we admitted to our court."

Mariana, who had reclined herself by the side of Adrian, took up the lute, and after a short prelude, sang the words thus imperfectly translated: —

THE SONG OF THE FLORENTINE LADY.

Enjoy the more the smiles of noon
 If doubtful be the morrow;
And know the Fort of Life is soon
 Betrayed to Death by Sorrow!

Death claims us all; then, Grief, away!
 We 'll own no meaner master;
The clouds that darken round the day
 But bring the night the faster.

Love, feast, be merry while on earth, —
 Such, Grave, should be thy moral!
Ev'n Death himself is friends with Mirth,
 And veils the tomb with laurel.[2]

While gazing on the eyes I love,
 New life to mine is given:
If joy the lot of saints above,
 Joy fits us best for heaven.

[1] I know not if this be the same Visdomini who, three years afterwards, with one of the Medici, conducted so gallant a reinforcement to Scarperia, then besieged by Visconti d' Oleggio.

[2] At that time, in Italy, the laurel was frequently planted over the dead.

To this song, which was much applauded, succeeded those light and witty tales in which the Italian novelists furnished Voltaire and Marmontel with a model, — each, in his or her turn, taking up the discourse, and with an equal dexterity avoiding every lugubrious image or mournful reflection that might remind those graceful idlers of the vicinity of Death. At any other time the temper and accomplishments of the young Lord di Castello would have fitted him to enjoy and to shine in that Arcadian Court; but now he in vain sought to dispel the gloom from his brow, and the anxious thought from his heart. He revolved the intelligence he had received, wondered, guessed, hoped, and dreaded still; and if for a moment his mind returned to the scene about him, his nature, too truly poetical for the false sentiment of the place, asked itself in what, save the polished exterior and the graceful circumstance, the mirth that he now so reluctantly witnessed differed from the brutal revels in the convent of Santa Maria, — each alike in its motive, though so differing in the manner; equally callous and equally selfish, coining horror into enjoyment. The fair Mariana, whose partner had been reft from her, as the Queen had related, was in no mind to lose the new one she had gained. She pressed upon him from time to time the wine-flask and the fruits; and in those unmeaning courtesies her hand gently lingered upon his. At length the hour arrived when the companions retired to the Palace during the fiercer heats of noon, to come forth again in the declining sun, to sup by the side of the fountain, to dance, to sing, and to make merry by torch-light and the stars till the hour of rest. But Adrian, not willing to continue the entertainment, no sooner found himself in the apartment to which he was conducted than he resolved to effect a silent escape, as under all circumstances the shortest, and not perhaps the least courteous, farewell left to him. Accordingly, when all seemed quiet and hushed in the repose common to the inhabitants of the South during that hour, he left his apartment, descended the stairs, passed the outer court, and was already at the gate, when he heard himself called by a voice that spoke vexation and alarm. He turned to behold Mariana.

"Why, how now, Signor di Castello? Is our company so unpleasing, is our music so jarring, or are our brows so wrinkled that you should fly as the traveller flies from the witches he surprises at Benevento? Nay, you cannot mean to leave us yet?"

"Fair dame," returned the cavalier, somewhat disconcerted, "it is in vain that I seek to rally my mournful spirits, or to fit myself for the court to which nothing sad should come. Your laws hang about me like a culprit: better timely flight than harsh expulsion."

As he spoke he moved on, and would have passed the gate; but Mariana caught his arm.

"Nay," said she, softly, "are there no eyes of dark light, and no neck of wintry snow, that can compensate to thee for the absent one? Tarry and forget, as doubtless in absence even *thou* art forgotten!"

"Lady," answered Adrian, with great gravity, not unmixed with an ill-suppressed disdain, "I have not sojourned long enough amidst the sights and sounds of woe to blunt my heart and spirit into callousness to all around. Enjoy, if thou canst, and gather the rank roses of the sepulchre; but to me, haunted still by funeral images, Beauty fails to bring delight, and Love — even *holy* love — seems darkened by the Shadow of Death. Pardon me, and farewell!"

"Go, then," said the Florentine, stung and enraged at his coldness; "go, and find your mistress amidst the associations on which it pleases your philosophy to dwell. I did but deceive thee, blind fool, — as I had hoped for thine own good, — when I told thee Irene — was that her name? — was gone from Florence. Of her I know nought, and heard nought, save from thee. Go back and search the vault, and see whether thou lovest her still!"

CHAPTER IV.

WE OBTAIN WHAT WE SEEK, AND KNOW IT NOT.

In the fiercest heat of the day, and on foot, Adrian returned to Florence. As he approached the city, all that festive and gallant scene he had quitted seemed to him like a dream, — a vision of the gardens and bowers of an enchantress, from which he woke abruptly as a criminal may wake on the morning of his doom to see the scaffold and the deathsman; so much did each silent and lonely step into the funereal city bring back his bewildered thoughts at once to life and to death. The parting words of Mariana sounded like a knell at his heart. And now as he passed on, — the heat of the day, the lurid atmosphere, long fatigue, alternate exhaustion and excitement, combining with the sickness of disappointment, the fretting consciousness of precious moments irretrievably lost, and his utter despair of forming any systematic mode of search, — fever began rapidly to burn through his veins. His temples felt oppressed as with the weight of a mountain; his lips parched with intolerable thirst; his strength seemed suddenly to desert him; and it was with pain and labor that he dragged one languid limb after the other.

"I feel it," thought he, with the loathing nausea and shivering dread with which Nature struggles ever against death, "I feel it upon me, — the Devouring and the Viewless; I shall perish, and without saving her; nor shall even one grave contain us!"

But these thoughts served rapidly to augment the disease which began to pray upon him; and ere he reached the interior of the city, even thought itself forsook him. The images of men and houses grew indistinct and shadowy before his eyes; the burning pavement became unsteady and reeling beneath his feet; delirium gathered over him, and he went on his way muttering broken and incoherent words; the few who met fled

from him in dismay. Even the monks, still continuing their solemn and sad processions, passed with a murmured *bene vobis* to the other side from that on which his steps swerved and faltered. And from a booth at the corner of a street, four Becchini, drinking together, fixed upon him from their black masks the gaze that vultures fix upon some dying wanderer of the desert. Still he crept on, stretching out his arms like a man in the dark, and seeking, with the vague sense that yet struggled against the gathering delirium, to find out the mansion in which he had fixed his home; though many as fair to live, and as meet to die in, stood with open portals before and beside his path.

"Irene, Irene!" he cried, sometimes in a muttered and low tone, sometimes in a wild and piercing shriek, "where art thou? Where? I come to snatch thee from them; they shall not have thee, the foul and ugly fiends! Pah! how the air smells of dead flesh! Irene, Irene! we will away to mine own palace and the heavenly lake — Irene!"

While thus benighted, and thus exclaiming, two females suddenly emerged from a neighboring house, masked and mantled.

"Vain wisdom!" said the taller and slighter of the two, whose mantle, it is here necessary to observe, was of a deep blue, richly broidered with silver, of a shape and a color not common in Florence, but usual in Rome, where the dress of ladies of the higher rank was singularly bright in hue and ample in fold, — thus differing from the simpler and more slender draperies of the Tuscan fashion, — "Vain wisdom, to fly a relentless and certain doom!"

"Why, thou wouldst not have us hold the same home with three of the dead in the next chamber, — strangers too to us, — when Florence has so many empty halls? Trust me, we shall not walk far ere we suit ourselves with a safer lodgment."

"Hitherto, indeed, we have been miraculously preserved," sighed the other, whose voice and shape were those of extreme youth; "yet would that we knew where to fly, — what mount, what wood, what cavern, held my brother and his faithful Nina! I am sick with horrors!"

"Irene, Irene! Well, then, if thou art at Milan or some Lombard town, why do I linger here? To horse, to horse! Oh, no! no! — not the horse with the bells; not the death-cart!"

With a cry, a shriek, louder than the loudest of the sick man's, broke that young female away from her companion. It seemed as if a single step took her to the side of Adrian. She caught his arm, she looked in his face, she met his unconscious eyes, bright with a fearful fire. "It has seized him," she then said, in a deep but calmer tone — "the Plague!"

"Away, away! Are you mad?" cried her companion. "Hence, hence! Touch me not, now thou hast touched him! Go! Here we part!"

"Help me to bear him somewhere! See, he faints, he droops, he falls! Help me, dear Signora, for pity, for the love of God!"

But wholly possessed by the selfish fear which overcame all humanity in that miserable time, the elder woman, though naturally kind, pitiful, and benevolent, fled rapidly away, and soon vanished. Thus left alone with Adrian, who had now, in the fierceness of the fever that preyed within him, fallen on the ground, the strength and nerve of that young girl did not forsake her. She tore off the heavy mantle which encumbered her arms and cast it from her; and then, lifting up the face of her lover, — for who but Irene was that weak woman, thus shrinking not from the contagion of death? — she supported him on her breast, and called aloud and again for help. At length the Becchini in the booth before noticed (hardened in their profession, and who, thus hardened, better than the most cautious escaped the pestilence) lazily approached. "Quicker, quicker, for Christ's love!" said Irene. "I have much gold, — I will reward you well; help me to bear him under the nearest roof."

"Leave him to us, young lady; we have had our eye upon him," said one of the gravediggers. "We 'll do our duty by him, first and last."

"No, no! touch not his head, — that is my care. There, I will help you; so, — now then; but be gentle!"

Assisted by these portentous officers, Irene — who would not release her hold, but seemed to watch over the beloved eyes and lips, set and closed as they were, as if to look back the soul from parting — bore Adrian into a neighboring house and laid him on a bed, from which Irene (preserving, as only women do in such time, the presence of mind and vigilant providence which make so sublime a contrast with their keen susceptibilities) caused them first to cast off the draperies and clothing, which might retain additional infection. She then despatched them for new furniture and for whatsoever leech money might yet bribe to a duty, now chiefly abandoned to those heroic Brotherhoods who, however vilified in modern judgment by the crimes of some unworthy members, were yet, in the dark times, the best, the bravest, and the holiest agents to whom God ever delegated the power to resist the oppressor, to feed the hungry, to minister to woe; and who, alone amidst that fiery Pestilence (loosed, as it were, a demon from the abyss, to shiver into atoms all that binds the world to Virtue and to Law) seemed to awaken, as by the sound of an angel's trumpet, to that noblest Chivalry of the Cross, whose faith is the scorn of self, whose hope is beyond the lazar-house, whose feet, already winged for immortality, trample, with a conqueror's march, upon the graves of Death!

While this the ministry and the office of love, along that street in which Adrian and Irene had met at last, came singing, reeling, roaring, the dissolute and abandoned crew who had fixed their quarters in the Convent of Santa Maria de' Pazzi, their bravo chief at their head, and a nun (no longer in nun's garments) upon either arm. "A health to the Plague!" shouted the ruffian. "A health to the Plague!" echoed his frantic Bacchanals.

> "A health to the Plague! may she ever, as now,
> Loose the rogue from his chain and the nun from her vow!
> To the jailer a sword, to the captive a key,
> Hurrah for Earth's Curse! 't is a blessing to me."

"Holla!" cried the chief, stopping, "here, Margherita, here 's a brave cloak for thee, my girl; silver enow on it to fill thy purse, if it ever grow empty, — which it may, if ever the Plague grow slack."

"Nay," said the girl, who amidst all the havoc of debauch, retained much of youth and beauty in her form and face, "nay, Guidotto; perhaps it has infection."

"Pooh, child, silver never infects! Clap it on, clap it on. Besides, fate is fate, and when it is thine hour there will be other means besides the *gavocciolo*."

So saying, he seized the mantle, threw it roughly over her shoulders, and dragged her on as before, half pleased with the finery, half frightened with the danger; while gradually died away, along the lurid air and the mournful streets, the chant of that most miserable mirth.

CHAPTER V.

THE ERROR.

For three days — the fatal three days — did Adrian remain bereft of strength and sense. But he was not smitten by the scourge which his devoted and generous nurse had anticipated. It was a fierce and dangerous fever, brought on by the great fatigue, restlessness, and terrible agitation he had undergone.

No professional mediciner could be found to attend him, but a good friar — better, perhaps, skilled in the healing art than many who claimed its monopoly — visited him daily. And in the long and frequent absences to which his other and numerous duties compelled the monk, there was one ever at hand to smooth the pillow, to wipe the brow, to listen to the moan, to watch the sleep. And even in that dismal office, when, in the frenzy of the sufferer, her name, coupled with terms of passionate endearment, broke from his lips, a thrill of strange pleasure crossed the heart of the betrothed, which she chid as if it were a crime. But even the most unearthly love is selfish in the rapture of being loved! Words cannot tell, heart cannot divine, the mingled emotions that broke over her when, in some of those incoherent ravings, she dimly understood that *for her* the

city had been sought, the death dared, the danger incurred. And as then, bending passionately to kiss that burning brow, her tears fell fast over the idol of her youth, the fountains from which they gushed were those, fathomless and countless, which a life could not weep away. Not an impulse of the human and the woman heart that was not stirred; the adoring gratitude, the meek wonder thus to *be* loved, while deeming it so simple a merit thus *to* love, — as if all sacrifice *in* her were a thing of course, *to* her a virtue Nature could not paragon, words could not repay! And there he lay, — the victim to his own fearless faith, helpless, dependent upon her, a thing, between life and death, to thank, to serve, to be proud of yet protect, to compassionate yet revere, the saver, to be saved! Never seemed one object to demand at once from a single heart so many and so profound emotions, — the romantic enthusiasm of the girl, the fond idolatry of the bride, the watchful providence of the mother over her child.

And strange to say, with all the excitement of that lonely watch, scarcely stirring from his side, taking food only that her strength might not fail her, unable to close her eyes, though, from the same cause, she would fain have taken rest when slumber fell upon her charge, — with all such wear and tear of frame and heart, she seemed wonderfully supported. And the holy man marvelled, in each visit, to see the cheek of the nurse still fresh, and her eye still bright. In her own superstition she thought and felt that Heaven gifted her with a preternatural power to be true to so sacred a charge; and in this fancy she did not wholly err, — for Heaven *did* gift her with that diviner power, when it planted in so soft a heart the enduring might and energy of Affection! The friar had visited the sick man late on the third night, and administered to him a strong sedative. "This night," said he to Irene, "will be the crisis: should he awaken, as I trust he may, with a returning consciousness and a calm pulse, he will live; if not, young daughter, prepare for the worst. But should you note any turn in the disease that may excite alarm or require my attendance, this scroll will inform you where I am, if God spare me still, at each hour of the night and morning."

The monk retired, and Irene resumed her watch.

The sleep of Adrian was at first broken and interrupted; his features, his exclamations, his gestures, all evinced great agony, whether mental or bodily, — it seemed, as perhaps it was, a fierce and doubtful struggle between life and death for the conquest of the sleeper. Patient, silent, breathing but by long-drawn gasps, Irene sat at the bed-head. The lamp was removed to the farther end of the chamber, and its ray, shaded by the draperies, did not suffice to give to her gaze more than the outline of the countenance she watched. In that awful suspense, all the thoughts that hitherto had stirred her mind lay hushed and mute. She was only sensible to that unutterable fear which few of us have been happy enough not to know, that crushing weight under which we can scarcely breathe or move, the avalanche over us, freezing and suspended, which we cannot escape from, beneath which, every moment, we may be buried and overwhelmed. The whole destiny of life was in the chances of that single night! It was just as Adrian at last seemed to glide into a deeper and serener slumber that the bells of the death-cart broke with their boding knell the palpable silence of the streets; now hushed, now revived, as the cart stopped for its gloomy passengers, and coming nearer and nearer after every pause. At length she heard the heavy wheels stop under the very casement, and a voice, deep and muffled, calling aloud, "Bring out the dead!" She rose, and with a noiseless step passed to secure the door, when the dull lamp gleamed upon the dark and shrouded forms of the Becchini.

"You have not marked the door, nor set out the body," said one gruffly, "but this is the *third night!* He is ready for us."

"Hush! he sleeps; away, quick, — it is not the Plague that seized him."

"Not the Plague?" growled the Becchino in a disappointed tone; "I thought no other illness dare encroach upon the rights of the *gavocciolo!*"

"Go, — here's money; leave us."

And the grisly carrier sullenly withdrew. The cart moved

on, the bell renewed its summons, till slowly and faintly the dreadful larum died in the distance.

Shading the lamp with her hand, Irene stole to the bedside, fearful that the sound and the intrusion had disturbed the slumberer. But his face was still locked, as in a vice, with that iron sleep. He stirred not, the breath scarcely passed his lips; she felt his pulse as the wan hand lay on the coverlet, — there was a slight beat. She was contented, removed the light, and retiring to a corner of the room, placed the little cross suspended round her neck up on the table, and prayed, in her intense suffering, to Him who had known death, and who — Son of Heaven though He was, and Sovereign of the Seraphim — had also prayed, in His earthly travail, that the cup might pass away.

The morning broke, not, as in the North, slowly and through shadow, but with the sudden glory with which in those climates day leaps upon earth, — like a giant from his sleep. A sudden smile, a burnished glow, and night had vanished. Adrian still slept; not a muscle seemed to have stirred; the sleep was even heavier than before; the silence became a burden upon the air. Now in that exceeding torpor so like unto death, the solitary watcher became alarmed and terrified. Time passed; morning glided to noon; still not a sound or motion. The sun was midway in Heaven: the friar came not. And now, again touching Adrian's pulse, she felt no flutter; she gazed on him, appalled and confounded: surely nought living could be so still and pale! "Was it indeed sleep, might it not be —" She turned away, sick and frozen; her tongue clove to her lips. Why did the Father tarry? She would go to him; she would learn the worst; she could forbear no longer. She glanced over the scroll the monk had left her. "From sunrise," it said, "I shall be at the convent of the Dominicans. Death has striken many of the brethren." The convent was at some distance, but she knew the spot, and fear would wing her steps. She gave one wistful look at the sleeper, and rushed from the house. "I shall see thee again presently," she murmured. Alas! what hope can calculate beyond the moment? And who shall claim the tenure of "*The Again?*"

It was not many minutes after Irene had left the room ere,

with a long sigh, Adrian opened his eyes, an altered and another man; the fever was gone, the reviving pulse beat low, indeed, but calm. His mind was once more master of his body, and though weak and feeble, the danger was past, and life and intellect regained.

"I have slept long," he muttered; "and oh, such dreams! And methought I saw Irene, but could not speak to her, and while I attempted to grasp her, her face changed, her form dilated, and I was in the clutch of the foul gravedigger. It is late, the sun is high; I must be up and stirring. Irene is in Lombardy. No, no, — that was a lie, a wicked lie; she is at Florence; I must renew my search."

As this duty came to his remembrance, he rose from the bed. He was amazed at his own debility: at first he could not stand without support from the wall; by degrees, however, he so far regained the mastery of his limbs as to walk, though with effort and pain. A ravening hunger preyed upon him; he found some scanty and light food in the chamber, which he devoured eagerly, and with scarce less eagerness laved his enfeebled form and haggard face with the water that stood at hand. He now felt refreshed and invigorated, and began to indue his garments, which he found thrown on a heap beside the bed. He gazed with surprise and a kind of self-compassion upon his emaciated hands and shrunken limbs, and began now to comprehend that he must have had some severe but unconscious illness. "Alone, too," thought he; "no one here to tend me! Nature my only nurse! But alas! alas! how long a time may thus have been wasted, and my adored Irene — Quick, quick! not a moment more will I lose."

He soon found himself in the open street; the air revived him; and that morning had sprung up the blessed breeze, — the first known for weeks. He wandered on, very slowly and feebly, till he came to a broad square, from which, in the vista, might be seen one of the principal gates of Florence, and the fig-trees and olive-groves beyond. It was then that a Pilgrim of tall stature approached towards him as from the gate; his hood was thrown back, and gave to view a countenance of great but sad command, — a face in whose high features,

massive brow, and proud, unshrinking gaze, shaded by an expression of melancholy more stern than soft, Nature seemed to have written majesty and Fate disaster. As in that silent and dreary place, these two, the only tenants of the street, now encountered, Adrian stopped abruptly, and said, in a startled and doubting voice: "Do I dream still, or do I behold Rienzi?"

The Pilgrim paused also as he heard the name, and gazing long on the attenuated features of the young lord, said: "I am he that was Rienzi! And you, pale shadow, is it in this grave of Italy that I meet with the gay and high Colonna? Alas! young friend," he added, in a more relaxed and kindly voice, "hath the Plague not spared the flower of the Roman nobles? Come! I, the cruel and the harsh Tribune, *I* will be thy nurse; he who might have been my brother, shall yet claim from me a brother's care."

With these words, he wound his arm tenderly round Adrian; and the young noble, touched by his compassion, and agitated by the surprise, leaned upon Rienzi's breast in silence.

"Poor youth," resumed the Tribune, — for so, since rather fallen than deposed, he may yet be called, — "I ever loved the young (my brother died young), and you more than most. What fatality brought thee hither?"

"Irene!" replied Adrian, falteringly.

"Is it so really? Art thou a Colonna, and yet prize the fallen? The same duty has brought me also to the city of Death. From the farthest South; over the mountains of the robber; through the fastnesses of my foes; through towns in which the herald proclaimed in my ear the price of my head, — I have passed hither, on foot and alone, safe under the wings of the Almighty One. Young man, thou shouldst have left this task to one who bears a wizard's life, and whom Heaven and Earth yet reserve for an appointed end!"

The Tribune said this in a deep and inward voice; and in his raised eye and solemn brow might be seen how much his reverses had deepened his fanaticism, and added even to the sanguineness of his hopes.

"But," asked Adrian, withdrawing gently from Rienzi's arm,

"thou knowest, then, where Irene is to be found? Let us go together. Lose not a moment in this talk: time is of inestimable value; and a moment in this city is often but the border to eternity."

"Right!" said Rienzi, awakening to his object. "But fear not; I *have dreamed* that I shall save her, the gem and darling of my house. Fear not; *I* have no fear."

"Know you where to seek?" said Adrian, impatiently; "the Convent holds far other guests."

"Ha! so said my dream!"

"Talk not now of dreams," said the lover; "but if you have no other guide, let us part at once in quest of her. I will take yonder street, you take the opposite; and at sunset let us meet in the same spot."

"Rash man!" said the Tribune, with great solemnity, "scoff not at the visions which Heaven makes a parable to its Chosen. Thou seekest counsel of thy human wisdom; I, less presumptuous, follow the hand of the mysterious Providence, moving even now before my gaze as a pillar of light through the wilderness of dread. Ay, meet me here at sunset, and prove whose guide is the most unerring. If my dream tell me true, I shall see my sister living, ere the sun reach yonder hill, and by a church dedicated to Saint Mark."

The grave earnestness with which Rienzi spoke, impressed Adrian with a hope which his reason would not acknowledge. He saw him depart with that proud and stately step to which his sweeping garments gave a yet more imposing dignity, and then passed up the street to the right hand. He had not got half way when he felt himself pulled by the mantle. He turned, and saw the shapeless mask of a Becchino.

"I feared you were sped, and that another had cheated me of my office," said the gravedigger, "seeing that you returned not to the old Prince's palace. You don't know me from the rest of us I see; but I am the one you told to seek —"

"Irene!"

"Yes, Irene di Gabrini; you promised ample reward."

"You shall have it."

"Follow me."



The Becchino strode on, and soon arrived at a mansion. He knocked twice at the porter's entrance; an old woman cautiously opened the door. "Fear not, good aunt," said the gravedigger; "this is the young lord I spoke to thee of. Thou sayest thou hadst two ladies in the palace, who alone survived of all the lodgers, and their names were Bianca de Medici and — What was the other?"

"Irene di Gabrini, a Roman lady. But I told thee this was the fourth day they left the house, terrified by the deaths within it."

"Thou didst so. And was there anything remarkable in the dress of the Signora di Gabrini?"

"Yes, I have told thee, — a blue mantle, such as I have rarely seen, wrought with silver."

"Was the broidery that of stars, — silver stars," exclaimed Adrian, "with a sun in the centre?"

"It was."

"Alas, alas! the arms of the Tribune's family! I remember how I praised the mantle the first day she wore it, — the day on which we were betrothed!" And the lover at once conjectured the secret sentiment which had induced Irene to retain thus carefully a robe so endeared by association.

"You know no more of your lodgers?"

"Nothing."

"And is this all you have learned, knave?" cried Adrian.

"Patience. I must bring you from proof to proof, and link to link, in order to win my reward. Follow, Signor."

The Becchino, then passing through the several lanes and streets, arrived at another house, of less magnificent size and architecture. Again he tapped thrice at the parlor door, and this time came forth a man, withered, old, and palsied, whom death seemed to disdain to strike.

"Signor Astuccio," said the Becchino, "pardon me; but I told thee I might trouble thee again. This is the gentleman who wants to know what is often best unknown, — but that's not my affair. Did a lady, young and beautiful, with dark hair and of a slender form, enter this house, stricken with the first symptom of the Plague, three days since?"

"Ay, thou knowest that well enough; and thou knowest, still better, that she has departed these two days: it was quick work with her — quicker than with most!"

"Did she wear anything remarkable?"

"Yes, troublesome man: a blue cloak, with stars of silver."

"Could thou guess aught of her previous circumstances?"

"No, save that she raved much about the nunnery of Santa Maria de' Pazzi, and bravos, and sacrilege."

"Are you satisfied, Signor?" asked the gravedigger, with an air of triumph, turning to Adrian. "But no; I will satisfy thee better, if thou hast courage. Wilt thou follow?"

"I comprehend thee; lead on. Courage! What is there on earth now to fear?"

Muttering to himself, "Ay, leave me alone. I have a head worth something; I ask no gentleman to go by my word; I will make his own eyes the judge of what my trouble is worth," the gravedigger now led the way through one of the gates a little out of the city. And here, under a shed, sat six of his ghastly and ill-omened brethren, with spades and pick-axes at their feet.

His guide now turned round to Adrian, whose face was set, and resolute in despair.

"Fair Signor," said he, with some touch of lingering compassion, "wouldst thou really convince thine own eyes and heart? The sight may appal, the contagion may destroy, thee, — if, indeed, as it seems to me, Death has not already written '*mine*' upon thee."

"Raven of bode and woe!" answered Adrian, "seest thou not that all I shrink from is thy voice and aspect? Show me her I seek, living or dead."

"I will show her to you, then," said the Becchino, sullenly, "such as two nights since she was committed to my charge. Line and lineament may already be swept away, for the Plague hath a rapid besom; but I have left that upon her by which you will know the Becchino is no liar. Bring hither the torches, comrades, and lift the door. Never stare; it's the gentleman's whim, and he'll pay it well."

Turning to the right, while Adrian mechanically followed

his conductors, a spectacle whose dire philosophy crushes as with a wheel all the pride of mortal man — the spectacle of that vault in which earth hides all that on earth flourished, rejoiced, exulted — awaited his eye!

The Becchini lifted a ponderous grate, lowered their torches (scarcely needed; for through the aperture rushed, with a hideous glare, the light of the burning sun), and motioned to Adrian to advance. He stood upon the summit of the abyss and gazed below.

It was a large, deep, and circular space, like the bottom of an exhausted well. In niches cut into the walls of earth around lay, duly coffined, those who had been the earliest victims of the Plague, when the Becchino's market was not yet glutted, and priest followed, and friend mourned the dead. But on the floor below, *there* was the loathsome horror! Huddled and matted together — some naked, some in shrouds already black and rotten — lay the later guests, the unshriven and unblest! The torches, the sun, streamed broad and red over Corruption in all its stages, from the pale blue tint and swollen shape, to the moistened undistinguishable mass, or the riddled bones, where yet clung, in strips and tatters, the black and mangled flesh. In many, the face remained almost perfect, while the rest of the body was but bone: the long hair, the human face, surmounting the grisly skeleton. There was the infant, still on the mother's breast; there was the lover, stretched across the dainty limbs of his adored! The rats (for they clustered in numbers to that feast), disturbed, not scared, sat up from their horrid meal as the light glimmered over them, and thousands of them lay round, stark and dead, poisoned by that they fed on! There, too, the wild satire of the gravediggers had cast, though stripped of their gold and jewels, the emblems that spoke of departed rank, — the broken wand of the Councillor; the General's *bâton;* the Priestly Mitre! The foul and livid exhalations gathered like flesh itself, fungous and putrid, upon the walls, and the [1] —

[1] The description in the text is borrowed from the famous waxwork model (of the interior of the Charnel-house) at Florence.

But who shall detail the ineffable and unimaginable horrors that reigned over the Palace where the Great King received the prisoners whom the sword of the Pestilence had subdued?

But through all that crowded court — crowded with beauty and with birth, with the strength of the young, and the honors of the old, and the valor of the brave, and the wisdom of the learned, and the wit of the scorner, and the piety of the faithful — one only figure attracted Adrian's eye. Apart from the rest, a late-comer, the long locks streaming far and dark over arm and breast, lay a female, the face turned partially aside, the little seen not recognizable even by the mother of the dead; but wrapped round in that fatal mantle, on which, though blackened and tarnished, was yet visible the starry heraldry assumed by those who claimed the name of the proud Tribune of Rome. Adrian saw no more, he fell back in the arms of the gravediggers; when he recovered, he was still without the gates of Florence, reclined upon a green mound. His guide stood beside him, holding his steed by the bridle as it grazed patiently on the neglected grass. The other brethren of the axe had resumed their seat under the shed.

"So, you have revived! Ah! I thought it was only the effluvia; few stand it as we do. And so, as your search is over, deeming you would now be quitting Florence if you have any sense left to you, I went for your good horse. I have fed him since your departure from the palace. Indeed I fancied he would be my perquisite; but there are plenty as good. Come, young sir, mount! I feel a pity for you, I know not why, except that you are the only one I have met for weeks who seems to care for another more than for yourself. I hope you are satisfied now that I showed some brains, eh! in your service; and as I have kept my promise, you 'll keep yours."

"Friend," said Adrian, "here is gold enough to make thee rich. Here, too, is a jewel that merchants will tell thee princes might vie to purchase. Thou seemest honest, despite thy calling, or thou mightest have robbed and murdered me long since. Do me one favor more."

"By my poor mother's soul, yes."

"Take yon — yon clay from that fearful place. Inter it in some quiet and remote spot, apart, alone! You promise me; you swear it? It is well! And now help me on my horse. Farewell, Italy; and if I die not with this stroke, may I die as befits at once honor and despair, — with trumpet and banner round me, in a well-fought field against a worthy foe! Save a knightly death, nothing is left to live for!"

BOOK VII.

THE PRISON.

Fu rinchiuso in una torre grossa e larga; avea libri assai, suo Tito Livio, sue storie di Roma, la Bibbia, etc. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. c. 13.

He was immured in a high and spacious tower; he had books enough, — his Titus Livius, his histories of Rome, the Bible, etc.

CHAPTER I.

AVIGNON. — THE TWO PAGES. — THE STRANGER BEAUTY.

There is this difference between the Drama of Shakspeare and that of almost every other master of the same art: that in the first, the catastrophe is rarely produced by one single cause, one simple and continuous chain of events. Various and complicated agencies work out the final end. Unfettered by the rules of time and place, each time, each place depicted, presents us with its appropriate change of action or of actors. Sometimes the interest seems to halt, to turn aside, to bring us unawares upon objects hitherto unnoticed, or upon qualities of the characters hitherto hinted at, not developed. But in reality, the pause in the action is but to collect, to gather up, and to grasp, all the varieties of circumstance that conduce to the Great Result; and the art of fiction is only deserted for the fidelity of history. Whoever seeks to place before the world the true representation of a man's life and times, and enlarging the Dramatic into the Epic, extends his narrative over the vicissitudes of years, will find himself unconsciously, in this, the imitator of Shakspeare. New characters, each conducive to the end, new scenes, each leading to the last, rise



before him as he proceeds, sometimes seeming to the reader to delay, even while they advance, the dread catastrophe. The sacrificial procession sweeps along, swelled by new-comers, losing many that first joined it, before, at last, the same as a whole, but differing in its components, the crowd reaches the fated bourn of the Altar and the Victim!

It is five years after the date of the events I have recorded, and my story conveys us to the Papal Court at Avignon, — that tranquil seat of power to which the successors of Saint Peter had transplanted the luxury, the pomp, and the vices of the Imperial City. Secure from the fraud of violence of a powerful and barbarous nobility, the courtiers of the See surrendered themselves to a holiday of delight; their repose was devoted to enjoyment, and Avignon presented at that day perhaps the gayest and most voluptuous society of Europe. The elegance of Clement VI. had diffused an air of literary refinement over the grosser pleasures of the place, and the spirit of Petrarch still continued to work its way through the councils of faction and the orgies of debauch.

Innocent VI. had lately succeeded Clement, and whatever his own claims to learning,[1] he at least appreciated knowledge and intellect in others; so that the graceful pedantry of the time continued to mix itself with the pursuit of pleasure. The corruption which reigned through the whole place was too confirmed to yield to the example of Innocent, himself a man of simple habits and exemplary life. Though, like his predecessor, obedient to the policy of France, Innocent possessed a hard and an extended ambition. Deeply concerned for the interests of the Church, he formed the project of confirming and re-establishing her shaken dominion in Italy; and he regarded the tyrants of the various states as the principal obstacles to his ecclesiastical ambition. Nor was this the policy of Innocent VI. alone. With such exceptions as peculiar circumstances necessarily occasioned, the Papal See was,

[1] Matteo Villani (lib. iii. cap. 44) says that Innocent VI. had not much pretension to learning. He is reported, however, by other authorities, cited by Zefirino Re, to have been "eccellente canonista." He had been a professor in the University of Toulouse.

upon the whole, friendly to the political liberties of Italy. The Republics of the Middle Ages grew up under the shadow of the Church; and there, as elsewhere, it was found, contrary to a vulgar opinion, that Religion, however prostituted and perverted, served for the general protection of civil freedom, — raised the lowly, and resisted the oppressor.

At this period there appeared at Avignon a lady of singular and matchless beauty. She had come with a slender but well-appointed retinue from Florence, but declared herself of Neapolitan birth, — the widow of a noble of the brilliant court of the unfortunate Jane. Her name was Cesarini. Arrived at a place where, even in the citadel of Christianity, Venus retained her ancient empire, where Love made the prime business of life, and to be beautiful was to be of power, — the Signora Cesarini had scarcely appeared in public before she saw at her feet half the rank and gallantry of Avignon. Her female attendants were beset with bribes and billets, and nightly, beneath her lattice, was heard the plaintive serenade. She entered largely into the gay dissipation of the town, and her charms shared the celebrity of the hour with the verse of Petrarch. But though she frowned on none, none could claim the monopoly of her smiles. Her fair fame was as yet unblemished; but if any might presume beyond the rest, she seemed to have selected rather from ambition than love, and Giles, the warlike Cardinal d'Albornoz, all powerful at the sacred court, already foreboded the hour of his triumph.

It was late noon, and in the ante-chamber of the fair Signora waited two of that fraternity of pages, fair and richly clad, who at that day furnished the favorite attendants to rank of either sex.

"By my troth," cried one of these young servitors, pushing from him the dice with which himself and his companion had sought to beguile their leisure, "this is but dull work! and the best part of the day is gone. Our lady is late."

"And I have donned my new velvet mantle," replied the other, compassionately eyeing his finery.

"Chut, Giacomo," said his comrade, yawning; "a truce with

thy conceit! What news abroad, I wonder? Has his Holiness come to his senses yet?"

"His senses: what, is he mad then?" quoth Giacomo, in a serious and astonished whisper.

"I think he is, if, being Pope, he does not discover that he may at length lay aside mask and hood. 'Continent Cardinal — lewd Pope,' is the old motto, you know; something must be the matter with the good man's brain if he continue to live like a hermit."

"Oh, I have you! But faith, his Holiness has proxies eno'! The bishops take care to prevent women, Heaven bless them! going out of fashion; and Albornoz does not maintain your proverb touching the Cardinals."

"True; but Giles is a warrior, — a cardinal in the church, but a soldier in the city."

"Will he carry the fort here, think you, Angelo?"

"Why, fort is female, but —"

"But what?"

"The Signora's brow is made for power rather than love, fair as it is. She sees in Albornoz the prince, and not the lover. With what a step she sweeps the floor! it disdains even the cloth of gold!"

"Hark!" cried Giacomo, hastening to the lattice, "hear you the hoofs below? Ah, a gallant company!"

"Returned from hawking," answered Angelo, regarding wistfully the cavalcade as it swept the narrow street. "Plumes waving, steeds curveting — see how yon handsome cavalier presses close to that dame!"

"His mantle is the color of mine," sighed Giacomo.

As the gay procession paced slowly on till hidden by the winding street, and as the sound of laughter and the tramp of horses was yet faintly heard, there frowned right before the straining gaze of the pages a dark massive tower of the mighty masonry of the eleventh century; the sun gleamed sadly on its vast and dismal surface, which was only here and there relieved by loopholes and narrow slits, rather than casements. It was a striking contrast to the gayety around, — the glittering shops, and the gaudy train that had just filled the space below.

This contrast the young men seemed involuntarily to feel; they drew back, and looked at each other.

"I know your thoughts, Giacomo," said Angelo, the handsomer and elder of the two. "You think yon tower affords but a gloomy lodgment?"

"And I thank my stars that made me not high enough to require so grand a cage," rejoined Giacomo.

"Yet," observed Angelo, "it holds one who in birth was not our superior."

"Do tell me something of that strange man," said Giacomo, regaining his seat; "you are Roman, and should know."

"Yes," answered Angelo, haughtily drawing himself up, "I *am* Roman; and I should be unworthy my birth if I had not already learned what honor is due to the name of Cola di Rienzi!"

"Yet your fellow-Romans nearly stoned him, I fancy," muttered Giacomo. "Honor seems to lie more in kicks than money. Can you tell me," continued the page, in a louder key, "can you tell me if it be true that Rienzi appeared at Prague before the Emperor, and prophesied that the late Pope and all the Cardinals should be murdered, and a new Italian Pope elected, who should endue the Emperor with a golden crown, as Sovereign of Sicilia, Calabria, and Apulia,[1] and himself with a crown of silver as King of Rome and all Italy? And —"

"Hush!" interrupted Angelo, impatiently. "Listen to me, and you shall know the exact story. On *last* leaving Rome (thou knowest that, after his fall, he was present at the Jubilee in disguise) the Tribune —" here Angelo, pausing, looked round, and then with a flushed cheek and raised voice resumed, "yes, the *Tribune*, that *was* and *shall* be — travelled in disguise, as a pilgrim, over mountain and forest, night and day, exposed to rain and storm, no shelter but the cave, — he who had been, they say, the very spoilt one of Luxury. Arrived at length in Bohemia, he disclosed himself to a Florentine in Prague, and through his aid obtained audience of the Emperor Charles."

[1] An absurd fable, adopted by certain historians.

"A prudent man, the Emperor!" said Giacomo, "close-fisted as a miser. He makes conquests by bargain, and goes to market for laurels, — as I have heard my brother say, who was under him."

"True; but I have also heard that he likes bookmen and scholars, is wise and temperate, and much is yet hoped from him in Italy. Before the Emperor, I say, came Rienzi. 'Know, great Prince,' said he, 'that I am that Rienzi to whom God gave to govern Rome, in peace, with justice, and to freedom. I curbed the nobles, I purged corruption, I amended law. The powerful persecuted me; pride and envy have chased me from my dominions. Great as you are, fallen as I am, I too have wielded the sceptre, and might have worn a crown. Know, too, that I am illegitimately of your lineage; my father the son of Henry VII.,[1] the blood of the Teuton rolls in my veins, mean as were my earlier fortunes and humble my earlier name! From you, O king, I seek protection and I demand justice.'"[2]

"A bold speech, and one from equal to equal," said Giacomo; "surely you swell us out the words."

"Not a whit; they were written down by the Emperor's scribe, and every Roman who has once heard knows them by heart: once every Roman was the equal to a king, and Rienzi maintained our dignity in asserting his own."

Giacomo, who discreetly avoided quarrels, knew the weak side of his friend; and though in his heart he thought the Romans as good-for-nothing a set of turbulent dastards as all Italy might furnish, he merely picked a straw from his mantle and said, in rather an impatient tone, "Humph! proceed! did the Emperor dismiss him?"

"Not so: Charles was struck with his bearing and his spirit, received him graciously, and entertained him hospitably. He remained some time at Prague, and astonished all the learned with his knowledge and eloquence."[3]

[1] Uncle to the Emperor Charles.

[2] See, for this speech, the *Anonymous Biographer*, lib. ii. cap. 12.

[3] His Italian contemporary delights in representing this remarkable man as another Crichton. "Disputava," he says of him when at Prague, "disputava

"But if so honored at Prague, how comes he a prisoner at Avignon?"

"Giacomo," said Angelo, thoughtfully, "there are some men whom we, of another mind and mould, can rarely comprehend, and never fathom. And of such men I have observed that a supreme confidence in their own fortunes or their own souls is the most common feature. Thus impressed and thus buoyed, they rush into danger with a seeming madness, and from danger soar to greatness, or sink to death. So with Rienzi; dissatisfied with empty courtesies and weary of playing the pedant, since once he had played the prince, some say of his own accord, — though others relate that he was surrendered to the Pope's legate by Charles, — he left the Emperor's court, and without arms, without money, betook himself at once to Avignon!"

"Madness indeed!"

"Yet perhaps his only course, under all circumstances," resumed the elder page. "Once before his fall, and once during his absence from Rome, he had been excommunicated by the Pope's legate. He was accused of heresy, the ban was still on him. It was necessary that he should clear himself. How was the poor exile to do so? No powerful friend stood up for the friend of the people. No courtier vindicated one who had trampled on the neck of the nobles. His own genius was his only friend; on that only could he rely. He sought Avignon, to free himself from the accusations against him; and doubtless he hoped that there was but one step from his acquittal to his restoration. Besides, it is certain that the Emperor had been applied to formally to surrender Rienzi. He had the choice before him; for to that sooner or later it must come, — to go free, or to go in bonds; as a criminal, or as a Roman. He chose the latter. Wherever he passed along, the people rose in every town, in every hamlet. The name of the great Tribune was honored throughout all Italy. They besought him not to rush into the very den of peril; they implored him to save himself

con Mastri di teologia; molto diceva, parlava cose meravigliose . . . abbair fea ogni persona." — "He disputed with Masters of theology; he spoke much, he discoursed things wonderful; he astonished every one."

for that country which he had sought to raise. 'I go to vindicate myself and to triumph,' was the Tribune's answer. Solemn honors were paid him in the cities through which he passed;[1] and I am told that never ambassador, prince, or baron entered Avignon with so long a train as that which followed into these very walls the steps of Cola di Rienzi."

"And on his arrival?"

"He demanded an audience, that he might refute the charges against him. He flung down the gage to the proud cardinals who had excommunicated him. He besought a trial."

"And what said the Pope?"

"Nothing — by word. Yon tower was his answer!"

"A rough one!"

"But there have been longer roads than that from the prison to the palace, and God made not men like Rienzi for the dungeon and the chain."

As Angelo said this with a loud voice, and with all the enthusiasm with which the fame of the fallen Tribune had inspired the youth of Rome, he heard a sigh behind him. He turned in some confusion, and at the door which admitted to the chamber occupied by the Signora Cesarini stood a female of noble presence. Attired in the richest garments, gold and gems were dull to the lustre of her dark eyes; and as she now stood, erect and commanding, never seemed brow more made for the regal crown, never did human beauty more fully consummate the ideal of a heroine and a queen.

"Pardon me, Signora," said Angelo, hesitatingly, "I spoke loud, I disturbed you; but I am Roman, and my theme was —"

"Rienzi!" said the lady, approaching, — "a fit one to stir a Roman heart. Nay, no excuses; they would sound ill on thy generous lips. Ah! if —" The Signora paused suddenly, and sighed again; then in an altered and graver tone she resumed: "If fate restore Rienzi to his proper fortunes, he shall know what thou deemest of him."

[1] Per tutto la via li furo fatti solemni onori, etc. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 13.

"If you, lady, who are of Naples," said Angelo, with meaning emphasis, "speak thus of a fallen exile, what must I have felt who acknowledged a sovereign?"

"Rienzi is not of Rome alone, — he is of Italy, of the world," returned the Signora. "And you, Angelo, who have had the boldness to speak thus of one fallen, have proved with what loyalty you can serve those who have the fortune to own you."

As she spoke, the Signora looked at the page's downcast and blushing face long and wistfully, with the gaze of one accustomed to read the soul in the countenance.

"Men are often deceived," said she sadly, yet with a half smile, "but women rarely, — save in love. Would that Rome were filled with such as you! Enough! Hark! Is that the sound of hoofs in the court below?"

"Madam," said Giacomo, bringing his mantle gallantly over his shoulder, "I see the servitors of Monsignore the Cardinal d'Albornoz. It is the Cardinal himself."

"It is well!" said the Signora, with a brightening eye; "I await him!" With these words she withdrew by the door through which she had surprised the Roman page.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHARACTER OF A WARRIOR-PRIEST. — AN INTERVIEW. — THE INTRIGUE AND COUNTER-INTRIGUE OF COURTS.

Giles (or Egidio[1]), Cardinal d'Albornoz, was one of the most remarkable men of that remarkable time so prodigal of genius. Boasting his descent from the royal houses of Arragon and Leon, he had early entered the Church, and yet almost a youth, attained the archbishopric of Toledo. But no peaceful career, however brilliant, sufficed to his ambition. He could

[1] Egidio is the proper Italian equivalent to the French name Gilles; but the Cardinal is generally called, by the writers of that day, Gilio d'Albornoz.

not content himself with the honors of the Church unless they were the honors of a Church militant. In the war against the Moors, no Spaniard had more highly distinguished himself; and Alphonso XI., king of Castile, had insisted on receiving from the hand of the martial priest the badge of knighthood. After the death of Alphonso, who was strongly attached to him, Albornoz repaired to Avignon, and obtained from Clement VI. the cardinal's hat. With Innocent he continued in high favor; and now, constantly in the councils of the Pope, rumors of warlike preparation, under the banners of Albornoz, for the recovery of the papal dominions from the various tyrants that usurped them, were already circulated through the court.[1] Bold, sagacious, enterprising, and cold-hearted, — with the valor of the knight and the cunning of the priest, — such was the character of Giles, Cardinal d'Albornoz.

Leaving his attendant gentlemen in the antechamber, Albornoz was ushered into the apartment of the Signora Cesarini. In person, the Cardinal was about the middle height; the dark complexion of Spain had faded, by thought and the wear of ambitious schemes, into a sallow but hardy hue; his brow was deeply furrowed; and though not yet past the prime of life, Albornoz might seem to have entered age, but for the firmness of his step, the slender elasticity of his frame, and an eye which had acquired calmness and depth from thought, without losing any of the brilliancy of youth.

"Beautiful Signora," said the Cardinal, bending over the hand of the Cesarini with a grace which betokened more of the prince than of the priest, "the commands of his Holiness have detained me, I fear, beyond the hour in which you vouchsafed to appoint my homage; but my heart has been with you since we parted."

[1] It is a characteristic anecdote of this bold Churchman that Urban V. one day demanded an account of the sums spent in his military expedition against the Italian tyrants. The Cardinal presented to the Pope a wagon filled with the keys of the cities and fortresses he had taken. "This is my account," said he; "you perceive how I have invested your money." The Pope embraced him, and gave him no further trouble about his accounts.

"The Cardinal d'Albornoz," replied the Signora, gently withdrawing her hand and seating herself, "has so many demands on his time, from the duties of his rank and renown, that methinks to divert his attention for a few moments to less noble thoughts is a kind of treason to his fame."

"Ah! lady," replied the Cardinal, "never was my ambition so nobly directed as it is now. And it were a prouder lot to be at thy feet than on the throne of Saint Peter."

A momentary blush passed over the cheek of the Signora, yet it seemed the blush of indignation as much as of vanity; it was succeeded by an extreme paleness. She paused before she replied; and then, fixing her large and haughty eyes on the enamoured Spaniard, she said, in a low voice, —

"My Lord Cardinal, I do not affect to misunderstand your words, neither do I place them to the account of a general gallantry. I am vain enough to believe you imagine you speak truly when you say you love me."

"Imagine!" echoed the Spaniard.

"Listen to me," continued the Signora. "She whom the Cardinal Albornoz honors with his love has a right to demand of him its proofs. In the Papal Court, whose power like his? I require you to exercise it for me."

"Speak, dearest lady! Have your estates been seized by the barbarians of these lawless times? Hath any dared to injure you? Lands and titles, — are these thy wish? My power is thy slave."

"Cardinal, no! There is one thing dearer to an Italian and a woman than wealth or station, — it is revenge!"

The Cardinal drew back from the flashing eye that was bent upon him, but the spirit of her speech touched a congenial chord.

"There," said he, after a little hesitation, "there spake high descent. Revenge is the luxury of the well-born. Let serfs and churls forgive an injury. Proceed, lady."

"Hast thou heard the last news from Rome?" asked the Signora.

"Surely," replied the Cardinal, in some surprise, "we were poor statesmen to be ignorant of the condition of the capital



of the papal dominions; and my heart mourns for that unfortunate city. But wherefore wouldst thou question me of Rome? Thou art —"

"Roman! Know, my lord, that I have a purpose in calling myself of Naples. To your discretion I intrust my secret, — I am of Rome! Tell me of her state."

"Fairest one," returned the Cardinal, "I should have known that that brow and presence were not of the light *Campania*. My reason should have told me that they bore the stamp of the Empress of the World. The state of Rome," continued Albornoz, in a graver tone, "is briefly told. Thou knowest that after the fall of the able but insolent Rienzi, Pepin, Count of Minorbino (a creature of Montreal's), who had assisted in expelling him, would have betrayed Rome to Montreal; but he was neither strong enough nor wise enough, and the Barons chased him as he had chased the Tribune. Some time afterwards a new demagogue, John Cerroni, was installed in the Capitol. He once more expelled the nobles; new revolutions ensued; the Barons were recalled. The weak successor of Rienzi summoned the people to arms, — in vain; in terror and despair he abdicated his power, and left the city a prey to the interminable feuds of the Orsini, the Colonna, and the Savelli."

"Thus much I know, my lord; but when his Holiness succeeded to the chair of Clement VI. —"

"Then," said Albornoz, and a slight frown darkened his sallow brow, "then came the blacker part of the history. Two senators were elected in concert by the Pope."

"Their names?"

"Bertoldo Orsini, and one of the Colonna. A few weeks afterwards the high price of provisions stung the rascal stomachs of the mob; they rose, they clamored, they armed, they besieged the Capitol —"

"Well, well!" cried the Signora, clasping her hands, and betokening in every feature her interest in the narration.

"Colonna only escaped death by a vile disguise; Bertoldo Orsini was stoned."

"Stoned! — there fell one!"

"Yes, lady, one of a great house, the least drop of whose blood were worth an ocean of plebeian puddle. At present all is disorder, misrule, anarchy, at Rome. The contests of the nobles shake the city to the centre; and prince and people, wearied of so many experiments to establish a government, have now no governor but the fear of the sword. Such, fair madam, is the state of Rome. Sigh not; it occupies now our care. It shall be remedied; and I, madam, may be the happy instrument of restoring peace to your native city."

"There is but one way of restoring peace to Rome," answered the Signora, abruptly, "and that is, — the restoration of Rienzi!"

The Cardinal started. "Madam," said he, "do I hear aright? Are you not nobly born? Can you desire the rise of a plebeian? Did you not speak of revenge, and now you ask for mercy?"

"Lord Cardinal," said the beautiful Signora, earnestly, "I do not ask for mercy; such a word is not for the lips of one who demands justice. Nobly born I am, — ay, and from a stock to whose long descent from the patricians of ancient Rome the high line of Aragon itself would be of yesterday. Nay, I would not offend you, Monsignore; your greatness is not borrowed from pedigrees and tombstones, — your greatness is your own achieving. Would you speak honestly, my lord, you would own that you are proud only of *your own* laurels, and that, in your heart, you laugh at the stately fools who trick themselves out in the mouldering finery of the dead!"

"Muse! prophetess! you speak aright," said the high-spirited Cardinal, with unwonted energy; "and your voice is like that of the Fame I dreamed of in my youth. Speak on, speak ever!"

"Such," continued the Signora, "such as your pride is the just pride of Rienzi; proud that he is the workman of his own great renown. In such as the Tribune of Rome we acknowledge the founders of noble lineage. Ancestry makes not them, — they make ancestry. Enough of this. I am of noble race, it is true; but my house, and those of many,

have been crushed and broken beneath the yoke of the Orsini and Colonna, — it is against them I desire revenge. But I am better than an Italian lady, — I am a Roman woman; I weep tears of blood for the disorders of my unhappy country. I mourn that even you, my lord, — yes, that a barbarian, however eminent and however great, — should mourn for Rome. I desire to restore her fortunes."

"But Rienzi would only restore his own."

"Not so, my Lord Cardinal; not so. Ambitious and proud he may be, — great souls are so, — but he has never had one wish divorced from the welfare of Rome. But put aside all thought of his interests; it is not of these I speak. You desire to re-establish the papal power in Rome. Your senators have failed to do it. Demagogues fail, — Rienzi alone can succeed; he alone can command the turbulent passions of the Barons; he alone can sway the capricious and fickle mob. Release, restore Rienzi, and through Rienzi the Pope regains Rome!"

The Cardinal did not answer for some moments. Buried as in a revery, he sat motionless, shading his face with his hand. Perhaps he secretly owned there was a wiser policy in the suggestions of the Signora than he cared openly to confess. Lifting his head, at length, from his bosom, he fixed his eyes upon the Signora's watchful countenance, and with a forced smile said, —

"Pardon me, madam; but while we play the politicians, forget not that I am thy adorer. Sagacious may be thy counsels, yet wherefore are they urged? Why this anxious interest for Rienzi? If by releasing him the Church may gain an ally, am I sure that Giles d'Albornoz will not raise a rival?"

"My lord," said the Signora, half rising, "you are my suitor; but your rank does not tempt me, your gold cannot buy. If you love me, I have a right to command your services to whatsoever task I would require: it is the law of chivalry. If ever I yield to the addresses of mortal lover, it will be to the man who restores to my native land her hero and her savior."

"Fair patriot," said the Cardinal, "your words encourage my hope, yet they half damp my ambition; for fain would I

desire that love, and not service, should alone give me the treasure that I ask. But hear me, sweet lady: you overrate my power; I cannot deliver Rienzi, — he is accused of rebellion, he is excommunicated for heresy. His acquittal rests with himself."

"You can procure his trial?"

"Perhaps, lady."

"That *is* his acquittal. And a private audience of his Holiness?"

"Doubtless."

"*That* is his restoration! Behold all I ask!"

"And then, sweet Roman, it will be *mine* to ask," said the Cardinal, passionately, dropping on his knee, and taking the Signora's hand. For one moment that proud lady felt that she was woman, — she blushed, she trembled; but it was not (could the Cardinal have read that heart) with passion or with weakness, it was with terror and with shame. Passively she surrendered her hand to the Cardinal, who covered it with kisses.

"Thus inspired," said Albornoz, rising, "I will not doubt of success. To-morrow I wait on thee again."

He pressed her hand to his heart — the lady felt it not. He sighed his farewell — she did not hear it. Lingeringly he gazed, and slowly he departed. But it was some moments before, recalled to herself, the Signora felt that she was alone.

"Alone!" she cried, half aloud, and with wild emphasis, "alone! Oh, what have I undergone, what have I said? Unfaithful even in thought to *him?* Oh, never, never! I that have felt the kiss of his hallowing lips, that have slept on his kingly heart — I! — Holy Mother, befriend and strengthen me!" she continued, as, weeping bitterly, she sank upon her knees; and for some moments she was lost in prayer. Then, rising composed, but deadly pale, and with the tears rolling heavily down her cheeks, the Signora passed slowly to the casement. She threw it open, and bent forward; the air of the declining day came softly on her temples; it cooled, it mitigated, the fever that preyed within. Dark and huge be-

fore her frowned, in its gloomy shadow, the tower in which Rienzi was confined; she gazed at it long and wistfully, and then, turning away, drew from the folds of her robe a small and sharp dagger. "Let me save him for glory!" she murmured, "and *this* shall save me from dishonor!"

CHAPTER III.

HOLY MEN. — SAGACIOUS DELIBERATIONS. — JUST RESOLVES. — AND SORDID MOTIVES TO ALL.

ENAMOURED of the beauty, and almost equally so of the lofty spirit, of the Signora Cesarini, as was the warlike Cardinal of Spain, love with him was not so master a passion as that ambition of complete success in all the active designs of life which had hitherto animated his character and signalized his career. Musing, as he left the Signora, on her wish for the restoration of the Roman Tribune, his experienced and profound intellect ran swiftly through whatever advantages to his own political designs might result from that restoration. We have seen that it was the intention of the new Pontiff to attempt the recovery of the patrimonial territories, now torn from him by the gripe of able and disaffected tyrants. With this view, a military force was already in preparation, and the Cardinal was already secretly nominated the chief. But the force was very inadequate to the enterprise, and Albornoz depended much upon the moral strength of the cause in bringing recruits to his standard in his progress through the Italian states. The wonderful rise of Rienzi had excited an extraordinary enthusiasm in his favor through all the free populations of Italy. And this had been yet more kindled and inflamed by the influential eloquence of Petrarch, who, at that time possessed of a power greater than ever, before or since (not even excepting the Sage of Ferney), wielded by a single literary man, had put forth his boldest genius in behalf of the

Roman Tribune. Such a companion as Rienzi in the camp of the Cardinal might be a magnet of attraction to the youth and enterprise of Italy. On nearing Rome, he might himself judge how far it would be advisable to reinstate Rienzi as a delegate of the papal power. And in the meanwhile the Roman's influence might be serviceable, whether to awe the rebellious nobles or conciliate the stubborn people. On the other hand, the Cardinal was shrewd enough to perceive that no possible good could arise from Rienzi's present confinement. With every month it excited deeper and more universal sympathy. To his lonely dungeon turned half the hearts of republican Italy. Literature had leagued its new and sudden, and therefore mighty and even disproportioned, power with his cause; and the Pope, without daring to be his judge, incurred the odium of being his jailer. "A popular prisoner," said the sagacious Cardinal to himself, "is the most dangerous of guests. Restore him as your servant, or destroy him as your foe. In this case I see no alternative but acquittal or the knife." In these reflections that able plotter, deep in the Machiavelism of the age, divorced the lover from the statesman.

Recurring now to the former character, he felt some disagreeable and uneasy forebodings at the earnest interest of his mistress. Fain would he have attributed, either to some fastasy of patriotism or some purpose of revenge, the anxiety of the Cesarini; and there was much in her stern and haughty character which favored that belief. But he was forced to acknowledge to himself some jealous apprehension of a sinister and latent motive, which touched his vanity and alarmed his love. "Howbeit," he thought, as he turned from his unwilling fear, "I can play with her at her own weapons: I can obtain the release of Rienzi, and claim my reward. If denied, the hand that opened the dungeon can again rivet the chain. In her anxiety is my power!"

These thoughts the Cardinal was still revolving in his palace, when he was suddenly summoned to attend the Pontiff.

The pontifical palace no longer exhibited the gorgeous yet graceful luxury of Clement VI., and the sarcastic Cardinal



smiled to himself at the quiet gloom of the ante-chambers. "He thinks to set an example, this poor native of Limoges!" thought Albornoz; "and has but the mortification of finding himself eclipsed by the poorest bishop. He humbles himself, and fancies that the humility will be contagious!"

His Holiness was seated before a small and rude table bestrewed with papers, his face buried in his hands; the room was simply furnished, and in a small niche beside the casement was an ivory crucifix; below, the death's head and cross-bones, which most monks then introduced with a purpose similar to that of the ancients by the like ornaments, — mementos of the shortness of life, and therefore admonitions to make the best of it. On the ground lay a map of the Patrimonial Territory, with the fortresses in especial distinctly and prominently marked. The Pope gently lifted up his head as the Cardinal was announced, and discovered a plain but sensible and somewhat interesting countenance. "My son!" said he, with a kindly courtesy to the lowly salutation of the proud Spaniard, "scarcely wouldst thou imagine, after our long conference this morning, that new cares would so soon demand the assistance of thy counsels. Verily, the wreath of thorns stings sharp under the triple crown; and I sometimes long for the quiet abode of my old professor's chair in Toulouse: my station is of pain and of toil."

"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," observed the Cardinal, with pious and compassionate gravity.

Innocent could scarcely refrain a smile as he replied: "The lamb that carries the cross must have the strength of the lion. Since we parted, my son, I have had painful intelligence; our couriers have arrived from the Campagna, — the heathen rage furiously, — the force of John di Vico has augmented fearfully, and the most redoubted adventurer of Europe has enlisted under his banner."

"Does his Holiness," cried the Cardinal, anxiously, "speak of Fra Moreale, the Knight of St. John?"

"Of no less a warrior," returned the Pontiff. "I dread the vast ambition of that wild adventurer."

"Your Holiness hath cause," said the Cardinal, dryly.

"Some letters of his have fallen into the hands of the servants of the Church; they are here: read them, my son."

Albornoz received and deliberately scanned the letters; this done, he replaced them on the table, and remained for a few moments silent and absorbed.

"What think you, my son?" said the Pope at length, with an impatient and even peevish tone.

"I think that, with Montreal's hot genius and John di Vico's frigid villany, your Holiness may live to envy, if not the quiet, at least the revenue, of the Professor's chair."

"How, Cardinal!" said the Pope, hastily, and with an angry flush on his pale brow. The Cardinal quietly proceeded.

"By these letters it seems that Montreal has written to all the commanders of free lances throughout Italy, offering the highest pay of a soldier to every man who will join his standard, combined with the richest plunder of a brigand. He meditates great schemes, then! I know the man!"

"Well, and our course?"

"Is plain," said the Cardinal, loftily, and with an eye that flashed with a soldier's fire. "Not a moment is to be lost! Thy son should at once take the field. Up with the Banner of the Church!"

"But are we strong enough? our numbers are few. Zeal slackens! the piety of the Baldwins is no more!"

"Your Holiness knows well," said the Cardinal, "that for the multitude of men there are two watchwords of war, — Liberty and Religion. If Religion begins to fail, we must employ the profaner word. 'Up with the Banner of the Church, and down with the tyrants!' We will proclaim equal laws and free government;[1] and, God willing, our camp shall prosper better with those promises than the tents of Montreal with the more vulgar shout of 'Pay and Rapine.'"

"Giles d'Albornoz," said the Pope, emphatically, — and warmed by the spirit of the Cardinal, he dropped the wonted

[1] In correcting the pages of this work, in the year 1847 . . ., strange coincidences between the present policy of the Roman Church and that by which in the fourteenth century it recovered both spiritual and temporal power, cannot fail to suggest themselves.

etiquette of the phrase: "I trust implicitly to you, — now the right hand of the Church, hereafter, perhaps, its head. Too well I feel that the lot has fallen on a lowly place. My successor must requite my deficiencies."

No changing hue, no brightening glance, betrayed to the searching eye of the Pope whatever emotion these words had called up in the breast of the ambitious Cardinal. He bowed his proud head humbly as he answered: "Pray Heaven that Innocent VI. may long live to guide the Church to glory. For Giles d'Albornoz, less priest than soldier, the din of the camp, the breath of the war-steed, suggest the only aspirations which he ever dares indulge. But has your Holiness imparted to your servant all that — "

"Nay," interrupted Innocent, "I have yet intelligence equally ominous. This John di Vico, — pest go with him! — who still styles himself (the excommunicated ruffian!) Prefect of Rome, has so filled that unhappy city with his emissaries that we have well-nigh lost the seat of the Apostle. Rome, long in anarchy, seems now in open rebellion. The nobles — sons of Belial! — it is true, are once more humbled; but how? One Baroncelli, a new demagogue, the fiercest, the most bloody that the Fiend ever helped, has arisen, is invested by the mob with power, and uses it to butcher the people and insult the Pontiff! Wearied of the crimes of this man, — which are not even decorated by ability, — the shout of the people day and night along the streets is for 'Rienzi the Tribune.'"

"Ha!" said the Cardinal, "Rienzi's faults then are forgotten in Rome, and there is felt for him the same enthusiasm in that city as in the rest of Italy?"

"Alas! it is so."

"It is well; I have thought of this: Rienzi can accompany my progress — "

"My son! the rebel, the heretic — "

"By your Holiness's absolution will become a quiet subject and orthodox Catholic," said Albornoz. "Men are good or bad as they suit our purpose. What matters a virtue that is useless, or a crime that is useful to us? The army of the Church proceeds against tyrants: it proclaims everywhere to the Papal

towns the restoration of their popular constitutions. Sees not your Holiness that the acquittal of Rienzi, the popular darling, will be hailed an earnest of your sincerity? Sees not your Holiness that his name will fight for us? Sees not your Holiness that the great demagogue Rienzi must be used to extinguish the little demagogue Baroncelli? We must regain the Romans, whether of the city or whether in the seven towns of John di Vico. When they hear Rienzi is in our camp, trust me, we shall have a multitude of deserters from the tyrants; trust me we shall hear no more of Baroncelli."

"Ever sagacious," said the Pope, musingly. "It is true we can use this man; but with caution. His genius is formidable —"

"And therefore must be conciliated; if we acquit, we must make him ours. My experience has taught me this: when you cannot slay a demagogue by law, crush him with honors. He must be no longer Tribune of the People. Give him the Patrician title of *Senator*, and he is then the Lieutenant of the Pope!"

"I will see to this, my son. Your suggestions please, but alarm me; he shall at least be examined. But if found a heretic —"

"Should, I humbly advise, be declared a saint."

The Pope bent his brow for a moment; but the effort was too much for him, and after a moment's struggle he fairly laughed aloud.

"Go to, my son!" said he, affectionately patting the Cardinal's sallow cheek. "Go to! If the world heard thee, what would it say?"

"That Giles d'Albornoz had just enough religion to remember that the State is a Church, but not too much to forget that the Church is a State."

With these words the conference ended. That very evening the Pope decreed that Rienzi should be permitted the trial he had demanded.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LADY AND THE PAGE.

It wanted three hours of midnight when Albernoz, resuming his character of gallant, despatched to the Signora Cesarini the following billet: —

"Your commands are obeyed. Rienzi will receive an examination on his faith. It is well that he should be prepared. It may suit your purpose, as to which I am so faintly enlightened, to appear to the prisoner what you are, — the obtainer of this grace. See how implicitly one noble heart can trust another! I send by the bearer an order that will admit one of your servitors to the prisoner's cell. Be it, if you will, your task to announce to him the new crisis of his fate. Ah! madam, may fortune be as favorable to me, and grant me the same intercessor! From thy lips my sentence is to come."

As Albornoz finished this epistle, he summoned his confidential attendant, a Spanish gentleman who saw nothing in his noble birth that should prevent his fulfilling the various behests of the Cardinal.

"Alvarez," said he, "these to the Signora Cesarini by another hand; thou art unknown to her household. Repair to the state tower: this to the Governor admits thee. Mark who is admitted to the prisoner Cola di Rienzi. Know his name, examine whence he comes. Be keen, Alvarez. Learn by what motive the Cesarini interests herself in the prisoner's fate. All too of herself, — birth, fortunes, lineage, — would be welcome intelligence. Thou comprehendest me? It is well. One caution, — thou hast no mission from, no connection with, me. Thou art an officer of the prison, or of the Pope, — what thou wilt. Give me the rosary; light the lamp before the crucifix; place yon hair-shirt beneath those arms. I would have it appear as if *meant* to be hidden! Tell Gomez that the Dominican preacher is to be admitted."

"Those friars have zeal," continued the Cardinal to himself, as, after executing his orders, Alvarez withdrew. "They would burn a man, but only on the Bible! They are worth conciliating, if the triple crown be really worth the winning; were it mine, I would add the eagle's plume to it."

And plunged into the aspiring future, this bold man forgot even the object of his passion. In real life, after a certain age, ambitious men love, indeed, but it is only as an interlude. And indeed with most men, life has more absorbing, though not more frequent, concerns than those of love. Love is the business of the idle, but the idleness of the busy.

The Cesarini was alone when the Cardinal's messenger arrived; and he was scarcely dismissed with a few lines, expressive of a gratitude which seemed to bear down all those guards with which the coldness of the Signora usually fenced her pride, before the page Angelo was summoned to her presence.

The room was dark with the shades of the gathering night when the youth entered, and he discerned but dimly the outline of the Signora's stately form; but by the tone of her voice he perceived that she was deeply agitated.

"Angelo," said she, as he approached, "Angelo —" and her voice failed her. She paused as for breath, and again proceeded: "You alone have served us faithfully; you alone shared our escape, our wanderings, our exile; you alone know my secret; you of my train alone are Roman! — Roman! it was once a great name. Angelo, the name has fallen; but it is only because the nature of the Roman race fell first. Haughty they are, but fickle; fierce, but dastard; vehement in promise, but rotten in their faith. You are a Roman; and though I have proved your truth, your very birth makes me afraid of falsehood."

"Madam," said the page, "I was but a child when you admitted me into your service, and I am yet only on the verge of manhood. But boy though I yet be, I would brave the stoutest lance of knight or freebooter in defence of the faith of Angelo Villani to his liege lady and his native land."

"Alas! alas!" said the Signora, bitterly, "such have been the *words* of thousands of thy race. What have been their

deeds? But I will trust thee, as I have trusted ever. I know that thou art covetous of honor, that thou hast youth's comely and bright ambition."

"I am an orphan and a bastard," said Angelo, bluntly, "and circumstance stings me sharply on to action; I would win my own name."

"Thou shalt," said the Signora. "We shall live yet to reward thee. And now be quick. Bring hither one of thy page's suits, — mantle and head-gear. Quick, I say; and whisper not to a soul what I have asked of thee."

CHAPTER V.

THE INMATE OF THE TOWER.

THE night slowly advanced, and in the highest chamber of that dark and rugged tower which fronted the windows of the Cesarini's palace sat a solitary prisoner. A single lamp burned before him on a table of stone and threw its rays over an open Bible, and those stern but fantastic legends of the prowess of ancient Rome which the genius of Livy has dignified into history.[1] A chain hung pendent from the vault of the tower and confined the captive, but so as to leave his limbs at sufficient liberty to measure at will the greater part of the cell. Green and damp were the mighty stones of the walls, and through a narrow aperture, high out of reach, came the moonlight, and slept in long shadow over the rude floor. A bed at one corner completed the furniture of the room. Such for months had been the abode of the conqueror of the haughtiest Barons, and the luxurious dictator of the stateliest city of the world!

Care and travel and time and adversity had wrought their change in the person of Rienzi. The proportions of his frame

[1] Avea libri assai, suo Tito Livio, sue storie di Roma, la Bibbia et altri libri assai, non finava di studiare. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 13. See translation to motto to Book VII. p. 86.

had enlarged from the compact strength of earlier manhood; the clear paleness of his cheek was bespread with a hectic and deceitful glow. Even in his present studies, intent as they seemed, and genial though the lecture to a mind enthusiastic even to fanaticism, his eyes could not rivet themselves as of yore steadily to the page. The charm was gone from the letters. Every now and then he moved restlessly, started, re-settled himself, and muttered broken exclamations like a man in an anxious dream. Anon, his gaze impatiently turned upward, about, around, and there was a strange and wandering fire in those large, deep eyes which might have thrilled the beholder with a vague and unaccountable awe.

Angelo had in the main correctly narrated the more recent adventures of Rienzi after his fall. He had first with Nina and Angelo betaken himself to Naples, and found a fallacious and brief favor with Louis, king of Hungary; that harsh but honorable monarch had refused to yield his illustrious guest to the demands of Clement, but had plainly declared his inability to shelter him in safety. Maintaining secret intercourse with his partisans at Rome, the fugitive then sought a refuge with the Eremites, sequestered in the lone recesses of the Monte Maiella, where in solitude and thought he had passed a whole year, save the time consumed in his visit to and return from Florence. Taking advantage of the Jubilee in Rome, he had then, disguised as a pilgrim, traversed the vales and mountains still rich in the melancholy ruins of ancient Rome, and entering the city, his restless and ambitious spirit indulged in new but vain conspiracies.[1] Excommunicated a second time by the Cardinal di Ceccano, and again a fugitive, he shook the dust from his feet as he left the city, and raising his hands towards those walls, in which are yet traced the witness of the Tarquins, cried aloud: "Honored as thy prince, persecuted as thy victim, — Rome, Rome, thou shalt yet receive me as thy conqueror!"

Still disguised as a pilgrim, he passed unmolested through Italy into the Court of the Emperor Charles of Bohemia, where the page, who had probably witnessed, had rightly

[1] Rainald, Ann. 1350, N. 4, E. 5.

narrated, his reception. It is doubtful, however, whether the conduct of the Emperor had been as chivalrous as appears by Angelo's relation, or whether he had not delivered Rienzi to the Pontiff's emissaries. At all events, it is certain that from Prague to Avignon, the path of the fallen Tribune had been as one triumph. His strange adventures; his unbroken spirit; the new power that Intellect daily and wonderfully excited over the minds of the rising generation; the eloquence of Petrarch; and the common sympathy of the vulgar for fallen greatness, — all conspired to make Rienzi the hero of the age. Not a town through which he passed which would not have risked a siege for his protection, not a house that would not have sheltered him, not a hand that would not have struck in his defence. Refusing all offers of aid, disdaining all occasion of escape, inspired by his indomitable hope and his unalloyed belief in the brightness of his own destinies, the Tribune sought Avignon — and found a dungeon!

These, his external adventures, are briefly and easily told. But who shall tell what passed within; who narrate the fearful history of the heart; who paint the rapid changes of emotion and of thought, the indignant grief, the stern dejection, the haughty disappointment that saddened while it never destroyed the resolve of that great soul? Who can say what must have been endured, what meditated, in the hermitage of Maiella; on the lonely hills of the perished empire it had been his dream to restore; in the Courts of Barbarian Kings; and above all, on returning, obscure and disguised, amidst the crowds of the Christian world, to the seat of his former power? What elements of memory, and in what a wild and fiery brain! What reflections to be conned in the dungeons of Avignon by a man who had pushed into all the fervor of fanaticism four passions, a single one of which has, in excess, sufficed to wreck the strongest reason, — passions which in themselves it is most difficult to combine: the dreamer, the aspirant, the very nympholept of Freedom, yet of Power, — of knowledge, yet of Religion!

"Ay," muttered the prisoner, "ay, these texts are comforting,

comforting. The righteous are not always oppressed." With a long sigh he deliberately put aside the Bible, kissed it with great reverence, remained silent and musing for some minutes; and then, as a slight noise was heard at one corner of the cell, said softly, "Ah, my friends, my comrades, the rats! It is their hour; I am glad I put aside the bread for them!" His eye brightened as it now detected those strange and unsocial animals, venturing forth through a hole in the wall, and darkening the moonshine on the floor, steal fearlessly towards him. He flung some fragments of bread to them, and for some moments watched their gambols with a smile. "Manchino, the white-faced rascal! he beats all the rest — ha, ha! he is a superior wretch; he commands the tribe, and will venture the first into the trap. How will he bite against the steel, the fine fellow, while all the ignobler herd will gaze at him afar off, and quake and fear, and never help. Yet if united, they might gnaw the trap and release their leader! Ah! ye are base vermin, ye eat my bread; yet if death came upon me, ye would riot on my carcase. Away!" and clapping his hands, the chain round him clanked harshly, and the noisome co-mates of his dungeon vanished in an instant.

That singular and eccentric humor which marked Rienzi, and which had seemed a buffoonery to the stolid sullenness of the Roman nobles, still retained its old expression in his countenance, and he laughed loud as he saw the vermin hurry back to their hiding-place.

"A little noise and the clank of a chain, — fie, how ye imitate mankind!" Again he sank into silence; and then heavily and listlessly drawing towards him the animated tales of Livy, said: "An hour to midnight! Waking dreams are better than sleep. Well, history tells us how men have risen — ay, and nations too — after sadder falls than that of Rienzi or of Rome!"

In a few minutes he was apparently absorbed in the lecture, — so intent indeed was he in the task that he did not hear the steps which wound the spiral stairs that conducted to his cell; and it was not till the wards harshly grated beneath the huge key, and the door creaked on its hinges, that Rienzi, in amaze

at intrusion at so unwonted an hour, lifted his eyes. The door had reclosed on the dungeon, and by the lonely and pale lamp he beheld a figure leaning, as for support, against the wall. The figure was wrapped from head to foot in the long cloak of the day, which, aided by a broad hat, shaded by plumes, concealed even the features of the visitor.

Rienzi gazed long and wistfully.

"Speak," said he at length, putting his hand to his brow. "Methinks either long solitude has bewildered me, or, sweet sir, your apparition dazzles; I know you not. Am I sure," and Rienzi's hair bristled while he slowly rose, — "am I sure that it is a living man who stands before me? Angels have entered the prison-house before now. Alas! an angel's comfort never was more needed."

The stranger answered not, but the captive saw that his heart heaved even beneath his cloak; loud sobs choked his voice. At length, as by a violent effort, he sprang forward, and sank at the Tribune's feet. The disguising hat, the long mantle, fell to the ground; it was the face of a woman that looked upward through passionate and glazing tears — the arms of a woman that clasped the prisoner's knees! Rienzi gazed, mute and motionless as stone. "Powers and Saints of Heaven!" he murmured at last, "do ye tempt me further? Is it — no, no — yet speak!"

"Beloved — adored! — do you not know me?"

"It is — it is!" shrieked Rienzi, wildly, "it is my Nina, — my wife, — my —" His voice forsook him. Clasped in each other's arms, the unfortunates for some moments seemed to have lost even the sense of delight at their reunion. It was as an unconscious and deep trance, through which something *like* a dream only faintly and indistinctly stirs.

At length recovered, at length restored, the first broken exclamations, the first wild caresses of joy over, Nina lifted her head from her husband's bosom and gazed sadly on his countenance. "Oh! what thou hast known since we parted, — what, since that hour when, borne on by thy bold heart and wild destiny, thou didst leave me in the Imperial Court, to seek again the diadem and find the chain! Ah! why did I

heed thy commands; why suffer thee to depart alone? How often in thy progress hitherward, in doubt, in danger, might this bosom have been thy resting-place, and this voice have whispered comfort to thy soul! Thou art well, my lord, my Cola? Thy pulse beats quicker than of old, thy brow is furrowed: ah, tell me thou art well!"

"Well," said Rienzi, mechanically. "Methinks so! The mind diseased blunts all sense of bodily decay. Well — yes! And thou, — thou at least art not changed, save to maturer beauty. The glory of the laurel-wreath has not faded from thy brow. Thou shalt yet — " Then breaking off abruptly: "Rome — tell me of Rome! And thou, — how camest thou hither? Ah! perhaps my doom is sealed, and in their mercy they have vouchsafed that I should see thee once more before the deathsman blinds me. I remember it is the grace vouchsafed to malefactors. When *I* was a lord of life and death, I too permitted the meanest criminal to say farewell to those he loved."

"No, not so, Cola!" exclaimed Nina, putting her hand before his mouth. "I bring thee more auspicious tidings. To-morrow thou art to be heard. The favor of the Court is propitiated. Thou wilt be acquitted."

"Ha! speak again."

"Thou wilt be heard, my Cola; thou must be acquitted!"

"And Rome be free! — Great God, I thank thee!"

The Tribune sank on his knees, and never had his heart, in his youngest and purest hour, poured forth thanksgiving more fervent, yet less selfish. When he rose again, the whole man seemed changed. His eye had resumed its earlier expressions of deep and serene command; majesty sat upon his brow. The sorrows of the exile were forgotten. In his sanguine and rapid thoughts, he stood once more the guardian of his country — and its sovereign!

Nina gazed upon him with that intense and devoted worship which steeped her vainer and her harder qualities in all the fondness of the softest woman. "Such," thought she, "was his look, eight years ago, when he left my maiden chamber, full of the mighty schemes which liberated Rome; such his

look when, at the dawning sun, he towered amidst the crouching Barons and the kneeling population of the city he had made his throne!"

"Yes, Nina," said Rienzi, as he turned and caught her eye, "my soul tells me that my hour is at hand. If they try me openly, they dare not convict; if they acquit me, they dare not but restore. To-morrow, saidst thou, to-morrow?"

"To-morrow, Rienzi; be prepared!"

"I am — for triumph! But tell me what happy chance brought thee to Avignon?"

"*Chance*, Cola!" said Nina, with reproachful tenderness. "Could I know that thou wert in the dungeons of the Pontiff and linger in idle security at Prague? Even at the Emperor's Court thou hadst thy partisans and favorers. Gold was easily procured. I repaired to Florence, disguised my name, and came hither to plot, to scheme, to win thy liberty, or to die with thee. Ah! did not thy heart tell thee that morning and night the eyes of thy faithful Nina gazed upon this gloomy tower, and that one friend, humble though she be, never could forsake thee!"

"Sweet Nina! Yet — yet — at Avignon power yields not to beauty without reward. Remember, there is a worse death than the pause of life."

Nina turned pale. "Fear not," she said, with a low but determined voice; "fear not that men's lips should say Rienzi's wife delivered him. None in this corrupted Court know that I am thy wife."

"Woman," said the Tribune, sternly, "thy lips elude the answer I would seek. In our degenerate time and land, thy sex and ours forget too basely what foulness writes a leprosy in the smallest stain upon a matron's honor. That thy heart would never wrong me, I believe; and if thy weakness, thy fear of my death, should wrong me, thou art a bitterer foe to Rienzi than the swords of the Colonna. Nina, speak!"

"Oh, that my soul could speak!" answered Nina. "Thy words are music to me, and not a thought of mine but echoes them. Could I touch this hand, could I meet that eye, and not know that death were dearer to thee than shame? Rienzi,

when last we parted, — in sadness, yet in hope, — what were thy words to me?"

"I remember them well," returned the Tribune: "'I leave thee,' I said, 'to keep alive at the Emperor's Court, by thy genius, the Great Cause. Thou hast youth and beauty, and courts have lawless and ruffian suitors. I give thee no caution; it were beneath thee and me. But I leave thee the power of death.' And with that, Nina —"

"Thy hands tremblingly placed in mine this dagger. I live. Need I say more?"

"My noble and beloved Nina, it is enough. Keep the dagger yet."

"Yes; till we meet in the Capitol of Rome!"

A slight tap was heard at the door; Nina regained in an instant her disguise.

"It is on the stroke of midnight," said the jailer, appearing at the threshold.

"I come," said Nina.

"And thou hast to prepare thy thoughts," she whispered to Rienzi. "Arm all thy glorious intellect. Alas! is it again we part? How my heart sinks!"

The presence of the jailer at the threshold broke the bitterness of parting by abridging it. The false page pressed her lips on the prisoner's hand, and left the cell.

The jailer, lingering behind for a moment, placed a parchment on the table. It was the summons from the court apportioned for the trial of the Tribune.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SCENT DOES NOT LIE. — THE PRIEST AND THE SOLDIER.

On descending the stairs, Nina was met by Alvarez.

"Fair page," said the Spaniard, gayly, "thy name, thou tellest me, is Villani, — Angelo Villani? Why, I know thy kinsman, methinks. Vouchsafe, young master, to enter this



chamber, and drink a night-cup to thy lady's health; I would fain learn tidings of my old friends."

"At another time," answered the false Angelo, drawing the cloak closer round her face; "it is late, — I am hurried."

"Nay," said the Spaniard, "you escape me not so easily;" and he caught firm hold of the page's shoulder.

"Unhand me, sir!" said Nina, haughtily, and almost weeping; for her strong nerves were yet unstrung. "Jailer, at thy peril, unbar the gates."

"So hot!" said Alvarez, surprised at so great a waste of dignity in a page, — "nay, I meant not to offend thee. May I wait on thy pageship to-morrow?"

"Ay, to-morrow," said Nina, eager to escape.

"And meanwhile," said Alvarez, "I will accompany thee home; we can confer by the way."

So saying, without regarding the protestations of the supposed page, he passed with Nina into the open air. "Your lady," said he, carelessly, "is wondrous fair; her lightest will is law to the greatest noble of Avignon. Methinks she is of Naples, — is it so? Art thou dumb, sweet youth?"

The page did not answer, but with a step so rapid that it almost put the slow Spaniard out of breath, hastened along the narrow space between the tower and the palace of the Signora Cesarini; nor could all the efforts of Alvarez draw forth a single syllable from his reluctant companion till they reached the gates of the palace, and he found himself discourteously left without the walls.

"A plague on the boy!" said he, biting his lips; "if the Cardinal thrive as well as his servant, by'r Lady, Monsignore is a happy man!"

By no means pleased with the prospect of an interview with Albornoz, who, like most able men, valued the talents of those he employed exactly in proportion to their success, the Spaniard slowly returned home. With the license accorded to him, he entered the Cardinal's chamber somewhat abruptly, and perceived him in earnest conversation with a Cavalier, whose long mustache, curled upward, and the bright cuirass worn underneath his mantle, seemed to betoken him of martial profession.

Pleased with the respite, Alvarez hastily withdrew; and in fact, the Cardinal's thoughts at that moment, and for that night, were bent upon other subjects than those of love.

The interruption served, however, to shorten the conversation between Albornoz and his guest. The latter rose.

"I think," said he, buckling on a short and broad rapier, which he had laid aside during the interview, — "I think, my Lord Cardinal, you encourage me to consider that our negotiation stands a fair chance of a prosperous close. Ten thousand florins, and my brother quits Viterbo and launches the thunderbolt of the Company on the lands of Rimini. On your part — "

"On my part it is agreed," said the Cardinal, "that the army of the Church interferes not with the course of your brother's arms; there is peace between us. One warrior understands another!"

"And the word of Giles d'Albornoz, son of the royal race of Aragon, is a guarantee for the faith of a Cardinal," replied the Cavalier, with a smile. "It is, my lord, in your *former* quality that we treat."

"There is my right hand," answered Albornoz, too politic to heed the insinuation. The Cavalier raised it respectfully to his lips, and his armed tread was soon heard descending the stairs.

"Victory," cried Albornoz, tossing his arms aloft, "victory, now thou art mine!"

With that he rose hastily, deposited his papers in an iron chest, and opening a concealed door behind the arras, entered a chamber that rather resembled a monk's cell than the apartment of a prince. Over a mean pallet hung a sword, a dagger, and a rude image of the Virgin. Without summoning Alvarez, the Cardinal unrobed, and in a few moments was asleep.

CHAPTER VII.

VAUCLUSE AND ITS GENIUS LOCI. — OLD ACQUAINTANCE RENEWED.

THE next day at early noon the Cavalier, whom our last chapter presented to the reader, was seen mounted on a strong Norman horse, winding his way slowly along a green and pleasant path some miles from Avignon. At length he found himself in a wild and romantic valley, through which wandered that delightful river whose name the verse of Petrarch has given to so beloved a fame. Sheltered by rocks, and in this part winding through the greenest banks, enamelled with a thousand wild flowers and water-weeds, went the crystal Sorgia. Advancing farther, the landscape assumed a more sombre and sterile aspect. The valley seemed enclosed or shut in by fantastic rocks of a thousand shapes, down which dashed and glittered a thousand rivulets. And in the very wildest of the scene, the ground suddenly opened into a quaint and cultivated garden, through which, amidst a profusion of foliage, was seen a small and lonely mansion, — the hermitage of the place. The horseman was in the valley of the Vaucluse, and before his eye lay the garden and the house of PETRARCH! Carelessly, however, his eye scanned the consecrated spot, and unconsciously it rested for a moment upon a solitary figure seated musingly by the margin of the river. A large dog at the side of the noonday idler barked at the horseman as he rode on. "A brave animal and a deep bay!" thought the traveller; to him the dog seemed an object much more interesting than its master. And so — as the crowd of little men pass unheeding and unmoved those in whom Posterity shall acknowledge the landmarks of their age — the horseman turned his glance from the Poet!

Thrice blessed name! Immortal Florentine,[1] not as the

[1] I need scarcely say that it is his origin, not his actual birth, which entitles us to term Petrarch a Florentine.

lover, nor even as the poet, do I bow before thy consecrated memory, — venerating thee as one it were sacrilege to introduce in this unworthy page, save by name and as a shadow, — but as the first who ever asserted to people and to prince the august majesty of Letters; who claimed for Genius the prerogative to influence states, to control opinion, to hold an empire over the hearts of men, and prepare events by animating passion and guiding thought! What — though but feebly felt and dimly seen — what do we yet owe to thee if Knowledge be now a Power, if MIND be a Prophet and a Fate, foretelling and foredooming the things to come! From the greatest to the least of us to whom the pen is at once a sceptre and a sword, the low-born Florentine has been the arch-messenger to smooth the way and prepare the welcome. Yes, even the meanest of the after-comers — even he who now vents his gratitude — is thine everlasting debtor! Thine how largely is the honor if his labors, humble though they be, find an audience wherever literature is known, preaching in remotest lands the moral of forgotten revolutions, and scattering in the palace and the market-place the seeds that shall ripen into fruit when the hand of the sower shall be dust, and his very name perhaps be lost! For few, alas! are they whose *names* may outlive the grave, but the *thoughts* of every man who writes are made undying; others appropriate, advance, exalt them; and millions of minds unknown, undreamed of, are required to produce the immortality of one.

Indulging meditations very different from those which the idea of Petrarch awakens in a later time, the Cavalier pursued his path.

The valley was long left behind, and the way grew more and more faintly traced, until it terminated in a wood, through whose tangled boughs the sunlight broke playfully. At length the wood opened into a wide glade, from which rose a precipitous ascent, crowned with the ruins of an old castle. The traveller dismounted, led his horse up the ascent, and gaining the ruins, left his steed within one of the roofless chambers, overgrown with the longest grass and a profusion of wild shrubs; thence ascending, with some toil, a narrow and broken staircase,

he found himself in a small room less decayed than the rest, of which the roof and floor were yet whole.

Stretched on the ground in his cloak, and leaning his head thoughtfully on his hand, was a man of tall stature and middle age. He lifted himself on his arm with great alacrity as the Cavalier entered.

"Well, Brettone, I have counted the hours: what tidings?"

"Albornoz consents."

"Glad news! Thou givest me new life. *Par Dieu!* I shall breakfast all the better for this, my brother. Hast thou remembered that I am famishing?"

Brettone drew from beneath his cloak a sufficiently huge cask of wine, and a small panier tolerably well filled; the inmate of the tower threw himself upon the provant with great devotion; and both the soldiers, — for such they were, — stretched at length on the ground, regaled themselves with considerable zest, talking hastily and familiarly between every mouthful.

"I say, Brettone, thou playest unfairly, — thou hast already devoured more than half the pasty; push it hitherwards. And so the Cardinal consents! What manner of man is he? Able, as they say?"

"Quick, sharp, and earnest, with an eye of fire, few words, and comes to the point."

"Unlike a priest, then, — a good brigand spoilt. What hast thou heard of the force he heads? Ho! not so fast with the wine."

"Scanty at present. He relies on recruits throughout Italy."

"What his designs for Rome? There, my brother, there tends my secret soul! As for these petty towns and petty tyrants, I care not how they fall, or by whom. But the Pope must not return to Rome. Rome must be mine, — the city of a new empire, the conquest of a new Attila! There every circumstance combines in my favor; the absence of the Pope, the weakness of the middle class, the poverty of the populace, the imbecile though ferocious barbarism of the Barons, have long concurred to render Rome the most facile, while the most glorious conquest!"

"My brother, pray Heaven your ambition do not wreck you at last; you are ever losing sight of the land! Surely, with the immense wealth we are acquiring, we may —"

"Aspire to be something greater than Free Companions, — generals to-day, and adventurers to-morrow. Rememberest thou how the Norman sword won Sicily, and how the bastard William converted on the field of Hastings his baton into a sceptre? I tell thee, Brettone, that this loose Italy has crowns on the hedge that a dexterous hand may carry off at the point of the lance. My course is taken: I will form the fairest army in Italy, and with it I will win a throne in the Capitol. Fool that I was six years ago! Instead of deputing that mad dolt, Pepin of Minorbino, had I myself deserted the Hungarian, and repaired with my soldiery to Rome, the fall of Rienzi would have been followed by the rise of Montreal. Pepin was outwitted, and threw away the prey after he had hunted it down. The lion shall not again trust the chase to the jackal!"

"Walter, thou speakest of the fate of Rienzi: let it warn thee!"

"Rienzi," replied Montreal, "I know the man! In peaceful times, or with an honest people, he would have founded a great dynasty. But he dreamed of laws and liberty for men who despise the first and will not protect the last. We, of a harder race, know that a new throne must be built by the feudal, and not the civil, system; and into the city we must transport the camp. It is by the multitude that the proud Tribune gained power, — by the multitude he lost it; it is by the sword that I will win it, and by the sword will I keep it!"

"Rienzi was too cruel; he should not have incensed the Barons," said Brettone, about to finish the flask, when the strong hand of his brother plucked it from him and anticipated the design.

"Pooh!" said Montreal, finishing the draught with a long sigh, "he was not cruel enough. He sought only to be just, and not to distinguish between noble and peasant. He should have distinguished! He should have exterminated the nobles root and branch. But this no Italian can do. This is reserved for me."

"Thou wouldst not butcher all the best blood of Rome?"

"Butcher! No, but I would seize their lands, and endow with them a new nobility, — the hardy and fierce nobility of the North, who well know how to guard their prince, and *will* guard him as the fountain of their own power. Enough of this now! And talking of Rienzi, — rots he still in his dungeon?"

"Why, this morning, ere I left, I heard strange news. The town was astir, groups in every corner. They said that Rienzi's trial was to be to-day; and from the names of the judges chosen, it is suspected that acquittal is already determined on."

"Ha! thou shouldst have told me of this before."

"Should he be restored to Rome, would it militate against thy plans?"

"Humph! I know not; deep thought and dexterous management would be needed. I would fain not leave this spot till I hear what is decided on."

"Surely, Walter, it would have been wiser and safer to have stayed with thy soldiery, and intrusted me with the absolute conduct of this affair."

"Not so," answered Montreal; "thou art a bold fellow enough, and a cunning, but my head in these matters is better than thine. Besides," continued the Knight, lowering his voice and shading his face, "I had vowed a pilgrimage to the beloved river and the old trysting-place. Ah me! — But all this, Brettone, thou understandest not; let it pass. As for my safety, since we have come to this amnesty with Albornoz, I fear but little danger, even if discovered; besides, I want the florins. There are those in this country, Germans, who could eat an Italian army at a meal, whom I would fain engage, and their leaders want earnest-money, the griping knaves! How are the Cardinal's florins to be paid?"

"Half now; half when thy troops are before Rimini!"

"Rimini! the thought whets my sword. Rememberest thou how that accursed Malatesta drove me from Aversa,[1] broke up

[1] This Malatesta, a signior of illustrious family, was one of the most skilful warriors in Italy. He and his brother Galeotto had been raised to the joint-

my camp, and made me render to him all my booty? There fell the work of years! But for that my banner now would be floating over St. Angelo. I will pay back the debt with fire and sword ere the summer has shed its leaves."

The fair countenance of Montreal grew terrible as he uttered these words, his hands griped the handle of his sword, and his strong frame heaved visibly, — tokens of the fierce and unsparing passions, by the aid of which a life of rapine and revenge had corrupted a nature originally full no less of the mercy than the courage of Provençal chivalry.

Such was the fearful man who now — the wildness of his youth sobered, and his ambition hardened and concentred — was the rival with Rienzi for the mastery of Rome.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CROWD. — THE TRIAL. — THE VERDICT. — THE SOLDIER AND THE PAGE.

It was on the following evening that a considerable crowd had gathered in the streets of Avignon. It was the second day of the examination of Rienzi, and with every moment was expected the announcement of the verdict. Amongst the foreigners of all countries assembled in that seat of the Papal splendor, the interest was intense. The Italians, even of the highest rank, were in favor of the Tribune, the French against him. As for the good townspeople of Avignon themselves, they felt but little excitement in anything that did not bring money into their pockets; and if it had been put to the secret vote, no doubt there would have been a vast majority for burning the prisoner, as a marketable speculation.

Among the crowd was a tall man in a plain and rusty suit

tyranny of Rimini by the voice of its citizens. After being long the foes of the Church, they were ultimately named as its captains by the Cardinal Albornoz.

of armor, but with an air of knightly bearing which somewhat belied the coarseness of his mail; he wore no helmet, but a small morion of black leather, with a long projecting shade, much used by wayfarers in the hot climates of the South. A black patch covered nearly the whole of one cheek, and altogether he bore the appearance of a grim soldier, with whom war had dealt harshly, both in purse and person.

Many were the jests at the shabby swordman's expense with which that lively population amused their impatience; and though the shade of the morion concealed his eyes, an arch and merry smile about the corners of his mouth showed that he could take a jest at himself.

"Well," said one of the crowd (a rich Milanese), "I am of a state that *was* free, and I trust the People's man will have justice shown him."

"Amen," said a grave Florentine.

"They say," whispered a young student from Paris, to a learned doctor of laws with whom he abode, "that his defence has been a masterpiece."

"He hath taken no degrees," replied the doctor, doubtingly. "Ho! friend, why dost thou push me so? Thou hast rent my robe."

This was said to a minstrel, or *jongleur*, who, with a small lute slung round him, was making his way, with great earnestness, through the throng.

"I beg pardon, worthy sir," said the minstrel; "but this is a scene to be sung of. Centuries hence — ay, and in lands remote — legend and song will tell the fortunes of Cola di Rienzi, the friend of Petrarch and the Tribune of Rome!"

The young French student turned quickly round to the minstrel, with a glow on his pale face; not sharing the general sentiments of his countrymen against Rienzi, he felt that it was an era in the world when a minstrel spoke thus of the heroes of intellect — not of war.

At this time the tall soldier was tapped impatiently on the back.

"I pray thee, great sir," said a sharp and imperious voice, "to withdraw that tall bulk of thine a little on one side, —

I cannot see through thee; and I would fain my eyes were among the first to catch a glimpse of Rienzi as he passes from the court."

"Fair Sir page," replied the soldier, good-humoredly, as he made way for Angelo Villani, "thou wilt not always find that way in the world is won by commanding the strong. When thou art older thou wilt beard the weak, and the strong thou wilt wheedle."

"I must change my nature, then," answered Angelo (who was of somewhat small stature, and not yet come to his full growth), trying still to raise himself above the heads of the crowd.

The soldier looked at him approvingly; and as he looked he sighed, and his lips worked with some strange emotion.

"Thou speakest well," said he, after a pause. "Pardon me the rudeness of the question, but art thou of Italy? Thy tongue savors of the Roman dialect; yet I have seen lineaments like thine on this side the Alps."

"It may be, good fellow," said the page, haughtily; "but I thank Heaven that I am of Rome."

At this moment a loud shout burst from that part of the crowd nearest the court. The sound of trumpets again hushed the throng into deep and breathless silence, while the Pope's guards, ranged along the space conducting from the court, drew themselves up more erect, and fell a step or two back upon the crowd.

As the trumpets ceased, the voice of a herald was heard, but it did not penetrate within several yards of the spot where Angelo and the soldier stood; and it was only by a mighty shout, — that in a moment circled through and was echoed back by the wide multitude, — by the waving of kerchiefs from the windows, by broken ejaculations, which were caught up from lip to lip, that the page knew that Rienzi was acquitted.

"I would I could see his face!" sighed the page, querulously.

"And thou shalt," said the soldier; and he caught up the boy in his arms and pressed on with the strength of a giant,



parting the living stream from right to left as he took his way to a place near the guards, and by which Rienzi was sure to pass.

The page, half-pleased, half-indignant, struggled a little; but finding it in vain, consented tacitly to what he felt an outrage on his dignity.

"Never mind!" said the soldier; "thou art the first I ever willingly raised above myself, — and I do it now for the sake of thy fair face, which reminds me of one I loved."

But these last words were spoken low, and the boy, in his anxiety to see the hero of Rome, did not hear or heed them. Presently Rienzi came by: two gentlemen, of the Pope's own following, walked by his side. He moved slowly, amidst the greetings and clamor of the crowd, looking neither to the right nor left. His bearing was firm and collected, and save by the flush of his cheek, there was no external sign of joy or excitement. Flowers dropped from every balcony on his path; and just when he came to a broader space, where the ground was somewhat higher, and where he was in fuller view of the houses around, he paused, and uncovering, acknowledged the homage he had received, with a look, a gesture, which each who beheld never forgot. It haunted even that gay and thoughtless court when the last tale of Rienzi's life reached their ears. And Angelo, clinging then round that soldier's neck, recalled — But we must not anticipate.

It was not, however, to the dark tower that Rienzi returned. His home was prepared at the palace of the Cardinal d'Albornoz. The next day he was admitted to the Pope's presence, and on the evening of that day he was proclaimed Senator of Rome.

Meanwhile the soldier had placed Angelo on the ground; and as the page faltered out no courteous thanks, he interrupted him in a sad and kind voice, the tone of which struck the page forcibly, so little did it suit the rough and homely appearance of the man.

"We part," he said, "as strangers, fair boy; and since thou sayest thou art of Rome, there is no reason why my heart should have warmed to thee as it has done; yet if ever thou

wantest a friend, seek him"—and the soldier's voice sank into a whisper—"in Walter de Montreal."

Ere the page recovered his surprise at that redoubted name, which his earliest childhood had been taught to dread, the Knight of St. John had vanished amongst the crowd.

CHAPTER IX.

ALBORNOZ AND NINA.

But the eyes which, above all others, thirsted for a glimpse of the released captive were forbidden that delight. Alone in her chamber, Nina awaited the result of the trial. She heard the shouts, the exclamations, the tramp of thousands along the street; she felt that the victory was won; and, her heart long overcharged, she burst into passionate tears. The return of Angelo soon acquainted her with all that had passed; but it somewhat chilled her joy to find Rienzi was the guest of the dreaded Cardinal. That shock, in which certainty, however happy, replaces suspense, had so powerful an effect on her frame, joined to her loathing fear of a visit from the Cardinal, that she became for three days alarmingly ill; and it was only on the fifth day from that which saw Rienzi endowed with the rank of Senator of Rome, that she was recovered sufficiently to admit Albornoz to her presence.

The Cardinal had sent daily to inquire after her health, and his inquiries, to her alarmed mind, had appeared to insinuate a pretension to the right to make them. Meanwhile Albornoz had had enough to divert and occupy his thoughts. Having bought off the formidable Montreal from the service of John di Vico, one of the ablest and fiercest enemies of the Church, he resolved to march to the territories of that tyrant as expeditiously as possible, and so not to allow him time to obtain the assistance of any other band of the mercenary adventurers who found Italy the market for their valor. Occupied with

raising troops, procuring money, corresponding with the various free states, and establishing alliances in aid of his ulterior and more ambitious projects at the court of Avignon, the Cardinal waited with tolerable resignation the time when he might claim from the Signora Cesarini the reward to which he deemed himself entitled. Meanwhile he had held his first conversations with Rienzi, and, under the semblance of courtesy to the acquitted Tribune, Albornoz had received him as his guest, in order to make himself master of the character and disposition of one in whom he sought a minister and a tool. That miraculous and magic art, attested by the historians of the time, which Rienzi possessed over every one with whom he came into contact, however various in temper, station, or opinions, had not deserted him in his interview with the Pontiff. So faithfully had he described the true condition of Rome, so logically had he traced the causes and the remedies of the evils she endured, so sanguinely had he spoken of his own capacities for administering her affairs, and so brilliantly had he painted the prospects which that administration opened to the weal of the Church and the interests of the Pope, that Innocent, though a keen and shrewd and somewhat sceptical calculator of human chances, was entirely fascinated by the eloquence of the Roman.

"Is this the man," he is reported to have said, "whom for twelve months we have treated as a prisoner and a criminal? Would that it were on his shoulders only that the Christian empire reposed!"

At the close of the interview he had, with every mark of favor and distinction, conferred upon Rienzi the rank of Senator, — which, in fact, was that of Viceroy of Rome, — and had willingly acceded to all the projects which the enterprising Rienzi had once more formed, not only for recovering the territories of the Church, but for extending the dictatorial sway of the Seven-hilled City over the old dependencies of Italy.

Albornoz, to whom the Pope retailed this conversation, was somewhat jealous of the favor the new Senator had so suddenly acquired, and immediately on his return home sought an inter-

view with his guest. In his heart the Lord Cardinal, emphatically a man of action and business, regarded Rienzi as one rather cunning than wise, rather fortunate than great, a mixture of the pedant and the demagogue. But after a long and scrutinizing conversation with the new Senator, even he yielded to the spell of his enchanting and master intellect. Reluctantly Albornoz confessed to himself that Rienzi's rise was not the thing of chance; yet more reluctantly he perceived that the Senator was one whom he might treat with as an equal, but could not rule as a minion. And he entertained serious doubts whether it would be wise to reinstate him in a power which he evinced the capacity to wield and the genius to extend. Still, however, he did not repent the share he had taken in Rienzi's acquittal. His presence in a camp so thinly peopled was a matter greatly to be desired. And through his influence the Cardinal more than ever trusted to enlist the Romans in favor of his enterprise for the recovery of the territory of Saint Peter.

Rienzi, who panted once more to behold his Nina, endeared to him by trial and absence as by fresh bridals, was not however able to discover the name she had assumed at Avignon; and his residence with the Cardinal, closely but respectfully watched as he was, forbade Nina all opportunity of corresponding with him. Some half-bantering hints which Albornoz had dropped upon the interest taken in his welfare by the most celebrated beauty of Avignon, had filled him with a vague alarm, which he trembled to acknowledge even to himself. But the *volto sciolto*[1] which, in common with all Italian politicians, concealed whatever were his *pensieri stretti*, enabled him to baffle completely the jealous and lynx-like observation of the Cardinal. Nor had Alvarez been better enabled to satisfy the curiosity of his master. He had indeed sought the page Villani, but the imperious manner of that wayward and haughty boy had cut short all attempts at cross-examination; and all he could ascertain was that the real Angelo Villani was not the Angelo Villani who had visited Rienzi.

[1] *Volto sciolto, pensieri stretti*, — the countenance open, the thoughts restrained.

Trusting at last that he should learn all, and inflamed by such passion and such hope as he was capable of feeling, Albornoz now took his way to the Cesarini's palace.

He was ushered with due state into the apartment of the Signora. He found her pale, and with the traces of illness upon her noble and statue-like features. She rose as he entered; and when he approached, she half bent her knee and raised his hand to her lips. Surprised and delighted at a reception so new, the Cardinal hastened to prevent the condescension; retaining both her hands, he attempted gently to draw them to his heart.

"Fairest!" he whispered, "couldst thou know how I have mourned thy illness, — and yet it has but left thee more lovely, as the rain only brightens the flower. Ah! happy if I have promoted thy lightest wish, and if in thine eyes I may henceforth seek at once an angel to guide me and a paradise to reward."

Nina, releasing her hand, waved it gently, and motioned the Cardinal to a seat. Seating herself at a little distance, she then spoke with great gravity and downcast eyes.

"My lord, it is your intercession, joined to his own innocence, that has released from yonder tower the elected governor of the people of Rome. But freedom is the least of the generous gifts you have conferred: there is a greater in a fair name vindicated and rightful honors re-bestowed. For this, I rest ever your debtor; for this, if I bear children, they shall be taught to bless your name; for this, the historian who recalls the deeds of this age, and the fortunes of Cola di Rienzi, shall add a new chaplet to the wreaths you have already won. Lord Cardinal, I may have erred; I may have offended you: you may accuse me of woman's artifice. Speak not, wonder not, hear me out. I have but one excuse when I say that I held justified any means, short of dishonor, to save the life and restore the fortunes of Cola di Rienzi. Know, my lord, that she who now addresses you is his wife."

The Cardinal remained motionless and silent. But his sallow countenance grew flushed from the brow to the neck, and his thin lips quivered for a moment, and then broke into a wither-

ing and bitter smile. At length he rose from his seat, very slowly, and said, in a voice trembling with passion, —

"It is well, madam! Giles d'Albornoz has been, then, a puppet in the hands, a stepping-stone in the rise, of the plebeian demagogue of Rome. You but played upon me for your own purposes; and nothing short of a Cardinal of Spain and a Prince of the royal blood of Aragon was meet to be the instrument of a mountebank's juggle! Madam, yourself and your husband might justly be accused of ambition — "

"Cease, my lord!" said Nina, with unspeakable dignity; "whatever offence has been committed against you was mine alone. Till after our last interview, Rienzi knew not even of my presence at Avignon."

"At our last interview, lady (you do well to recall it!), methinks there was a hinted and implied contract. I have fulfilled my part, — I claim yours. Mark me, I do not forego that claim! As easily as I rend this glove can I rend the parchment which proclaims thy husband 'the Senator of Rome.' The dungeon is not death, and its door will open *twice*."

"My lord, my lord!" cried Nina, sick with terror, "wrong not so your noble nature, your great name, your sacred rank, your chivalric blood. You are of the knightly race of Spain; yours not the sullen, low, and inexorable vices that stain the petty tyrants of this unhappy land. You are no Visconti, no Castracani; you cannot stain your laurels with revenge upon a woman. Hear me," she continued, and she fell abruptly at his feet. "Men dupe, deceive our sex, and for selfish purposes; they are pardoned, even by their victims. Did *I* deceive you with a false hope? Well, what my object; what my excuse? My husband's liberty; my land's salvation! Woman — my lord, alas! your sex too rarely understand her weakness or her greatness! Erring — all human as she is to others, God gifts her with a thousand virtues to the one she loves! It is from that love that she alone drinks her nobler nature. For the hero of her worship she has the meekness of the dove, the devotion of the saint; for his safety in peril, for his rescue in misfortune, her vain sense imbibes the sagacity of the serpent, her weak heart the courage of the lioness! It

is this which, in absence, made me mask my face in smiles, that the friends of the houseless exile might not despair of his fate; it is this which brought me through forests beset with robbers, to watch the stars upon yon solitary tower; it was this which led my steps to the revels of your hated court, — this which made me seek a deliverer in the noblest of its chiefs; it is this which has at last opened the dungeon door to the prisoner now within your halls; and this, Lord Cardinal," added Nina, rising, and folding her arms upon her heart, "this, if your anger seeks a victim, will inspire me to die, without a groan, but without dishonor!"

Albornoz remained rooted to the ground, amazement, emotion, admiration, all busy at his heart. He gazed at Nina's flashing eyes and heaving bosom as a warrior of old upon a prophetess inspired; his eyes were riveted to hers as by a spell. He tried to speak, but his voice failed him. Nina continued:

"Yes, my lord, these are no idle words! If you seek revenge, it is in your power. Undo what you have done. Give Rienzi back to the dungeon, or to disgrace, and you are avenged. But not on *him*. All the hearts of Italy shall become to him a second Nina! I am the guilty one, and I the sufferer. Hear me swear: in that instant which sees new wrong to Rienzi, this hand is my executioner! My lord, I supplicate you no longer!"

Albornoz continued deeply moved. Nina but rightly judged him when she distinguished the aspiring Spaniard from the barbarous and unrelenting voluptuaries of Italy. Despite the profligacy that stained his sacred robe; despite all the acquired and increasing callousness of a hard, scheming, and sceptical man, cast amidst the worst natures of the worst of times, — there lingered yet in his soul much of the knightly honor of his race and country. High thoughts and daring spirits touched a congenial string in his heart, and not the less in that he had but rarely met them in his experience of camps and courts. For the first time in his life he felt that he had seen the woman who could have contented him even with wedlock, and taught him the proud and faithful love of which the minstrels of Spain had sung. He sighed, and still gazing on Nina,

approached her, almost reverentially; he knelt, and kissed the hem of her robe. "Lady," he said, "I would I could believe that you have altogether read my nature aright; but I were indeed lost to all honor, and unworthy of gentle birth, if I still harbored a single thought against the peace and virtue of one like thee. Sweet heroine," he continued, "so lovely, yet so pure, so haughty, and yet so soft, thou hast opened to me the brightest page these eyes have ever scanned in the blotted volume of mankind. Mayest thou have such happiness as life can give! But souls such as thine make their nest, like the eagle, upon rocks and amidst the storms. Fear me no more, think of me no more, — unless hereafter, when thou hearest men speak of Giles d'Albornoz, thou mayest say in thine own heart," and here the Cardinal's lip curled with scorn, "he did not renounce every feeling worthy of a man when Ambition and Fate endued him with the surplice of the priest."

The Spaniard was gone before Nina could reply.

BOOK VIII.

THE GRAND COMPANY.

MONTREAL nourrissoit de plus vastes projets; . . . il donnoit à sa campagnie un gouvernement régulier. . . . Par cette discipline il faisoit régner l'abondance dans son camp: les gens de guerre ne parloient, en Italie, que des richesses qu'on acquéroit à son service. — SISMONDI, *Hist. des Républiques Italiennes*, tom. vi. c. 42.

Montreal cherished more vast designs; . . . he subjected his company to a regular system of government. . . . By means of this discipline he kept his camp abundantly supplied, and military adventurers in Italy talked of nothing but the wealth won in his service. — SISMONDI'S *Hist. of Ital. Republics.*

CHAPTER I.

THE ENCAMPMENT.

IT was a most lovely day, in the very glow and meridian of an Italian summer, when a small band of horsemen were seen winding a hill which commanded one of the fairest landscapes of Tuscany. At their head was a Cavalier in a complete suit of chain armor, the links of which were so fine that they resembled a delicate and curious network, but so strongly compacted that they would have resisted spear or sword no less effectually than the heaviest corselet, while adapting themselves exactly and with ease to every movement of the light and graceful shape of the rider. He wore a hat of dark-green velvet shaded by long plumes, while of two squires behind, the one bore his helmet and lance, the other led a strong war-horse, completely cased in plates of mail, which seemed, however, scarcely to encumber its proud and agile paces. The countenance of the Cavalier was comely, but strongly marked,

and darkened, by long exposure to the suns of many climes, to a deep bronze hue; a few raven ringlets escaped from beneath his hat down a cheek closely shaven. The expression of his features was grave and composed even to sadness; nor could all the loveliness of the unrivalled scene before him dispel the quiet and settled melancholy of his eyes. Besides the squires, ten horsemen, armed *cap-à-pie*, attended the knight; and the low and murmured conversation they carried on at intervals, as well as their long fair hair, large stature, thick, short beards, and the studied and accurate equipment of their arms and steeds, bespoke them of a hardier and more warlike race than the children of the South. The cavalcade was closed with a man, almost of gigantic height, bearing a banner richly decorated, wherein was wrought a column, with the inscription, "ALONE AMIDST RUINS." Fair indeed was the prospect, which with every step expanded yet more widely its various beauty. Right before stretched a long vale, now covered with green woodlands glittering in the yellow sunlight, now opening into narrow plains bordered by hillocks, from whose mosses of all hues grew fantastic and odorous shrubs; while, winding amidst them, a broad and silver stream broke into light at frequent intervals, snatched by wood and hillock from the eye, only to steal upon it again in sudden and bright surprise. The opposite slope of gentle mountains, as well as that which the horsemen now descended, was covered with vineyards, trained in alleys and arcades; and the clustering grape laughed from every leafy and glossy covert as gayly as when the Fauns held a holiday in the shade. The eye of the Cavalier roved listlessly over this enchanting prospect, sleeping in the rosiest light of a Tuscan heaven, and then became fixed with a more earnest attention on the gray and frowning walls of a distant castle which, high upon the steepest of the opposite mountains, overlooked the valley.

"Behold," he muttered to himself, "how every Eden in Italy hath its curse! Wherever the land smiles fairest, be sure to find the brigand's tent and the tyrant's castle!"

Scarce had these thoughts passed his mind ere the shrill and sudden blast of a bugle, that sounded close amongst the

vineyards by the side of the path, startled the whole group. The cavalcade halted abruptly. The leader made a gesture to the squire who led his war-horse. The noble and practised animal remained perfectly still, save by champing its bit restlessly, and moving its quick ear to and fro, as aware of a coming danger, while the squire, unencumbered by the heavy armor of the Germans, plunged into the thicket and disappeared. He returned in a few minutes, already heated and breathless.

"We must be on our guard," he whispered; "I see the glimmer of steel through the vine-leaves."

"Our ground is unhappily chosen," said the Knight, hastily bracing on his helmet and leaping on his charger; and waving his hand towards a broader space in the road, which would permit the horsemen more room to act in union, with his small band he made hastily to the spot, the armor of the soldiers rattling heavily as two by two they proceeded on.

The space to which the Cavalier had pointed was a green semicircle of several yards in extent, backed by tangled copses of brushwood sloping down to the vale below. They reached it in safety; they drew up, breast to breast, in the form of a crescent, every visor closed save that of the Knight, who looked anxiously and keenly round the landscape.

"Hast thou heard, Giulio," he said to his favorite squire (the only Italian of the band), "whether any brigands have been seen lately in these parts?"

"No, my lord; on the contrary, I am told that every lance hath left the country to join the Grand Company of Fra Moreale. The love of his pay and plunder has drawn away the mercenaries of every Tuscan signor."

As he ceased speaking, the bugle sounded again from nearly the same spot as before; it was answered by a brief and martial note from the very rear of the horsemen. At the same moment, from the thickets behind broke the gleam of mail and spears. One after another, rank after rank, from the copse behind them, emerged men-at-arms, while suddenly, from the vines in front, still greater numbers poured forth with loud and fierce shouts.

"For God, for the Emperor, and for the Colonna!" cried the Knight, closing his visor; and the little band, closely serried, the lance in every rest, broke upon the rush of the enemy in front. A score or so, borne to the ground by the charge, cleared a path for the horsemen, and without waiting the assault of the rest, the Knight wheeled his charger and led the way down the hill, almost at full gallop, despite the roughness of the descent: a flight of arrows despatched after them fell idly on their iron mail.

"If they have no horse," cried the Knight, "we are saved!"

And indeed the enemy seemed scarcely to think of pursuing them, but, gathered on the brow of a hill, appeared contented to watch their flight.

Suddenly a curve in the road brought them before a broad and wide patch of waste land, which formed almost a level surface, interrupting the descent of the mountain. On the commencement of this waste, drawn up in still array, the sunlight broke on the breastplates of a long line of horsemen, whom the sinuosities of the road had hitherto concealed from the Knight and his party.

The little troop halted abruptly, retreat, advance, alike cut off; gazing first at the foe before them, that remained still as a cloud, every eye was then turned towards the Knight.

"An thou wouldst, my lord," said the leader of the Northmen, perceiving the irresolution of their chief, "we will fight to the last. You are the only Italian I ever knew whom I would willingly die for!"

This rude profession was received with a sympathetic murmur from the rest, and the soldiers drew closer around the Knight. "Nay, my brave fellows," said the Colonna, lifting his visor, "it is not in so inglorious a field, after such various fortunes, that we are doomed to perish. If these be brigands, as we must suppose, we can yet purchase our way. If the troops of some signor, we are strangers to the feud in which he is engaged. Give me yon banner; I will ride on to them."

"Nay, my lord," said Giulio; "such marauders do not always spare a flag of truce. There is danger—"

"For that reason your leader braves it. Quick!"

The Knight took the banner, and rode deliberately up to the horsemen. On approaching, his warlike eye could not but admire the perfect caparison of their arms, the strength and beauty of their steeds, and the steady discipline of their long and glittering line.

As he rode up, and his gorgeous banner gleamed in the noonlight, the soldiers saluted him. It was a good omen, and he hailed it as such. "Fair sirs," said the Knight, "I come, at once herald and leader of the little band who have just escaped the unlooked-for assault of armed men on yonder hill, and claiming aid, as knight from knight and soldier from soldier, I place my troop under the protection of your leader. Suffer me to see him."

"Sir Knight," answered one, who seemed the captain of the band, "sorry am I to detain one of your gallant bearing, and still more so on recognizing the device of one of the most potent houses of Italy. But our orders are strict, and we must bring all armed men to the camp of our General."

"Long absent from my native land, I knew not," replied the Knight, "that there was war in Tuscany. Permit me to crave the name of the General whom ye speak of, and that of the foe against whom ye march."

The Captain smiled slightly.

"Walter de Montreal is the General of the Grand Company, and Florence his present foe."

"We have fallen, then, into friendly, if fierce, hands," replied the Knight, after a moment's pause. "To Sir Walter de Montreal I am known of old. Permit me to return to my companions and acquaint them that if accident has made us prisoners, it is at least only to the most skilful warrior of his day that we are condemned to yield."

The Italian then turned his horse to join his comrades.

"A fair knight and a bold presence," said the Captain of the Companions to his neighbor, "though I scarce think it is the party we are ordered to intercept. Praised be the Virgin,

however, his men seem from the North! Them, perhaps, we may hope to enlist."

The Knight now, with his comrades, rejoined the troop. And on receiving their parole not to attempt escape, a detachment of thirty horsemen were despatched to conduct the prisoners to the encampment of the Grand Company.

Turning from the main road, the Knight found himself conducted into a narrow defile between the hills, which, succeeded by a gloomy tract of wild forest-land, brought the party at length into a full and abrupt view of a wide plain, covered with the tents of what, for Italian warfare, was considered a mighty army. A stream, over which rude and hasty bridges had been formed from the neighboring timber, alone separated the horsemen from the encampment.

"A noble sight!" said the captive Cavalier, with enthusiasm, as he reined in his steed and gazed upon the wild and warlike streets of canvas traversing each other in vistas broad and regular.

One of the captains of the Grand Company who rode beside him smiled complacently.

"There are few masters of the martial art who equal Fra Moreale," said he; "and savage, reckless, and gathered from all parts and all countries — from cavern and from market-place, from prison and from palace — as are his troops, he has reduced them already into a discipline which might shame even the soldiery of the Empire."

The Knight made no reply, but spurring his horse over one of the rugged bridges, soon found himself amidst the encampment. But that part at which he entered, little merited the praises bestowed upon the discipline of the army. A more unruly and disorderly array, the Cavalier, accustomed to the stern regularity of English, French, and German discipline, thought he had never beheld. Here and there, fierce, unshaven, half-naked brigands might be seen, driving before them the cattle which they had just collected by predatory excursions. Sometimes a knot of dissolute women stood — chattering, scolding, gesticulating — collected round groups of wild shagged Northmen, who, despite the bright purity of the

summer-noon, were already engaged in deep potations. Oaths and laughter, and drunken merriment and fierce brawl, rang from side to side; and ever and anon some hasty conflict with drawn knives was begun and finished by the fiery bravoes of Calabria or the Apennines, before the very eyes and almost in the very path of the troop. Tumblers and mountebanks and jugglers and Jew peddlers were exhibiting their tricks or their wares at every interval, apparently well inured to the lawless and turbulent market in which they exercised their several callings. Despite the protection of the horsemen who accompanied them, the prisoners were not allowed to pass without molestation. Groups of urchins, squalid, fierce, and ragged, seemed to start from the ground, and surrounded their horses like swarms of bees, uttering the most discordant cries, and with the gesture of savages rather demanding than beseeching money, which when granted, seemed only to render them more insatiable; while, sometimes mingled with the rest, were seen the bright eyes and olive cheek, and half-pleading, half-laughing smile of girls, whose extreme youth, scarce emerged from childhood, rendered doubly striking their utter and unredeemed abandonment.

"You did not exaggerate the decorum of the Grand Company!" cried the Knight, gravely, to his new acquaintance.

"Signor," replied the other, "you must not judge of the kernel by the shell. We are scarcely yet arrived at the camp. These are the outskirts, occupied rather by the rabble than the soldiers. Twenty thousand men, from the sink, it must be owned, of every town in Italy, follow the camp, to fight if necessary, but rather for plunder and for forage: such you now behold. Presently you will see those of another stamp."

The Knight's heart swelled high. "And to such men is Italy given up!" thought he. His revery was broken by a loud burst of applause from some convivialists hard by. He turned, and under a long tent, and round a board covered with wine and viands, sat some thirty or forty bravoes. A ragged minstrel, or *jongleur*, with an immense beard and mustachios, was tuning, with no inconsiderable skill, a lute which had

accompanied him in all his wanderings; and suddenly changing its notes into a wild and warlike melody, he commenced in a loud and deep voice the following song: —

THE PRAISE OF THE GRAND COMPANY.

1.

Ho! dark one from the golden South,
 Ho! fair one from the North,
Ho! coat of mail and spear of sheen,
 Ho! wherefore ride ye forth?
"We come from mount, we come from cave,
 We come across the sea,
In long array, in bright array,
 To Montreal's Companiè."
 Oh, the merry, merry band,
 Light heart and heavy hand,
 Oh, the Lances of the Free!

2.

Ho! princes of the castled height,
 Ho! burghers of the town, —
Apulia's strength, Romagna's pride,
 And Tusca's old renown, —
Why quail ye thus? why pale ye thus?
 What spectre do ye see?
"The blood-red flag and trampling march
 Of Montreal's Companiè!"
 Oh, the sunshine of your life,
 Oh, the thunders of your strife,
 Wild Lances of the Free!

3.

Ho! scutcheons o'er the vaulted tomb
 Where Norman valor sleeps,
Why shake ye so? why quake ye so?
 What wind the trophy sweeps?
"We shake without a breath; below,
 The dead are stirr'd to see
The Norman's fame revived again
 In Montreal's Companiè."
 Since Roger won his crown,
 Who hath equall'd your renown,
 Brave Lances of the Free?



4.

Ho! ye who seek to win a name,
Where deeds are bravest done;
Ho! ye who wish to pile a heap,
Where gold is lightest won;
Ho! ye who loathe the stagnant life,
Or shun the law's decree,
Belt on the brand and spur the steed,
To Montreal's Companiè.
And the maid shall share her rest,
And the miser share his chest,
With the Lances of the Free!
The Free!
The Free!
Oh, the Lances of the Free!

Then suddenly, as if inspired to a wilder flight by his own minstrelsy, the *jongleur*, sweeping his hand over the chords, broke forth into an air admirably expressive of the picture which his words, running into a rude, but lively and stirring doggerel, attempted to paint.

THE MARCH OF THE GRAND COMPANY.

Tirà, tira-là, trumpet and drum!
Rising bright o'er the height of the mountain they come,
German and Hun and the Islandrie
Who routed the Frenchman at famed Cressiè,
When the rose changed its hue with the *fleur-de-lis;*
With the Roman and Lombard and Piedmontese,
And the dark-haired son of the southern seas!
Tirà, tira-là! more near and near
Down the steep, — see them sweep, — rank by rank they appear!
With the Cloud of the Crowd hanging dark at their rear,
Serried and steadied and orderliè,
Like the course — like the force — of a marching sea!
Open your gates and out with your gold,
For the blood must be spilt, or the ransom be told!
Woe, Burghers, woe! Behold them led
By the stoutest arm and the wisest head,
With the snow-white cross on the cloth of red;
With the eagle eye and the lion port,
His barb for a throne, and his camp for a court!

Sovereign and scourge of the land is he, —
The kingly Knight of the Compagnè!
Hurrah — hurrah — hurrah!
Hurrah for the army — hurrah for its lord —
Hurrah for the gold that is got by the sword —
Hurrah — hurrah — hurrah!
For the Lances of the Free!

Shouted by the full chorus of those desperate boon-companions, and caught up and re-echoed from side to side, near and far, as the familiar and well-known words of the burden reached the ears of more distant groups or stragglers, the effect of this fierce and licentious minstrelsy was indescribable. It was impossible not to feel the zest which that daring life imparted to its daring followers, and even the gallant and stately Knight who listened to it reproved himself for an involuntary thrill of sympathy and pleasure.

He turned with some impatience and irritation to his companion, who had taken a part in the chorus, and said: "Sir, to the ears of an Italian noble, conscious of the miseries of his country, this ditty is not welcome. I pray you, let us proceed."

"I humbly crave your pardon, Signor," said the Free Companion; "but really so attractive is the life led by Free Lances under Fra Moreale that sometimes we forget the — But pardon me, we will on."

A few moments more, and bounding over a narrow circumvallation, the party found themselves in a quarter, animated indeed, but of a wholly different character of animation. Long lines of armed men were drawn up on either side of a path conducting to a large marquee, placed upon a little hillock, surmounted by a blue flag, and up this path armed soldiers were passing to and fro with great order, but with a pleased and complacent expression upon their swarthy features. Some that repaired to the marquee were bearing packets and bales upon their shoulders; those that returned seemed to have got rid of their burdens, but every now and then, impatiently opening their hands, appeared counting and recounting to themselves the coins contained therein.

The Knight looked inquiringly at his companion.

"It is the marquee of the merchants," said the captain; "they have free admission to the camp, and their property and persons are rigidly respected. They purchase each soldier's share of the plunder at fair prices, and either party is contented with the bargain."

"It seems, then, that there is some kind of rude justice observed amongst you," said the Knight.

"Rude! *Diavolo!* Not a town in Italy but would be glad of such even justice and such impartial laws. Yonder lie the tents of the judges, appointed to try all offences of soldier against soldier. To the right, the tent with the golden ball contains the treasurer of the army. Fra Moreale incurs no arrears with his soldiery."

It was, indeed, by these means that the Knight of St. John had collected the best-equipped and the best-contented force in Italy. Every day brought him recruits. Nothing was spoken of amongst the mercenaries of Italy but the wealth acquired in his service, and every warrior in the pay of Republic or of Tyrant sighed for the lawless standard of Fra Moreale. Already had exaggerated tales of the fortunes to be made in the ranks of the Great Company passed the Alps; and, even now, the Knight, penetrating farther into the camp, beheld from many a tent the proud banners and armorial blazon of German nobility and Gallic knighthood.

"You see," said the Free Companion, pointing to these insignia, "we are not without our different ranks in our wild city. And while we speak, many a golden spur is speeding hitherward from the North!"

All now in the quarter they had entered was still and solemn; only afar came the mingled hum or the sudden shout of the pandemonium in the rear, mellowed by distance to a not unpleasing sound. An occasional soldier, crossing their path, stalked silently and stealthily to some neighboring tent, and seemed scarcely to regard their approach.

"Behold! we are before the General's pavilion," said the Free Lance.

Blazoned with purple and gold, the tent of Montreal lay a

little apart from the rest. A brooklet from the stream they had crossed murmured gratefully on the ear, and a tall and wide-spreading beech cast its shadow over the gorgeous canvas.

While his troop waited without, the Knight was conducted at once to the presence of the formidable adventurer.

CHAPTER II.

ADRIAN ONCE MORE THE GUEST OF MONTREAL.

MONTREAL was sitting at the head of a table, surrounded by men, some military, some civil, whom he called his councillors, and with whom he apparently debated all his projects. These men, drawn from various cities, were intimately acquainted with the internal affairs of the several states to which they belonged. They could tell to a fraction the force of a signor, the wealth of a merchant, the power of a mob. And thus, in his lawless camp, Montreal presided, not more as a general than a statesman. Such knowledge was invaluable to the chief of the Great Company. It enabled him to calculate exactly the time to attack a foe, and the sum to demand for a suppression of hostilities. He knew what parties to deal with, where to importune, where to forbear. And it usually happened that, by some secret intrigue, the appearance of Montreal's banner before the walls of a city was the signal for some sedition or some broil within. It may be that he thus also promoted an ulterior, as well as his present, policy.

The divan were in full consultation when an officer entered, and whispered a few words in Montreal's ear. His eyes brightened. "Admit him," he said hastily. "Messires," he added to his councillors, rubbing his hands, "I think our net has caught our bird. Let us see."

At this moment the drapery was lifted and the Knight admitted.

"How!" muttered Montreal, changing color, and in evident disappointment. "Am I to be ever thus balked?"

"Sir Walter de Montreal," said the prisoner, "I am once more your guest. In these altered features you perhaps scarcely recognize Adrian di Castello."

"Pardon me, noble Signor," said Montreal, rising with great courtesy; "the mistake of my varlets disturbed my recollection for a moment. I rejoice once more to press a hand that has won so many laurels since last we parted. Your renown has been grateful to my ears. Ho!" continued the chieftain, clapping his hands, "see to the refreshment and repose of this noble Cavalier and his attendants. Lord Adrian, I will join you presently."

Adrian withdrew. Montreal, forgetful of his councillors, traversed his tent with hasty strides; then summoning the officer who had admitted Adrian, he said, "Count Landau still keeps the pass?"

"Yes, General!"

"Hie thee fast back, then, — the ambuscade must tarry till nightfall. We have trapped the wrong fox."

The officer departed, and shortly afterwards Montreal broke up the divan. He sought Adrian, who was lodged in a tent beside his own.

"My lord," said Montreal, "it is true that my men had orders to stop every one on the roads towards Florence. I am at war with that city. Yet I expected a very different prisoner from you. Need I add that you and your men are free?"

"I accept the courtesy, noble Montreal, as frankly as it is rendered. May I hope hereafter to repay it? Meanwhile permit me, without any disrespect, to say that had I learned the Grand Company was in this direction, I should have altered my course. I had heard that your arms were bent (somewhat, to my mind, more nobly) against Malatesta, the tyrant of Rimini!"

"They were so. He *was* my foe; he *is* my tributary. We conquered him. He paid us the price of his liberty. We marched by Asciano upon Sienna. For sixteen thousand florins we spared that city; and we now hang like a thunderbolt over

Florence, which dared to send her puny aid to the defence of Rimini. Our marches are forced and rapid, and our camp in this plain but just pitched."

"I hear that the Grand Company is allied with Albornoz, and that its General is secretly the soldier of the Church. Is it so?"

"Ay, Albornoz and I understand one another," replied Montreal, carelessly; "and not the less so that we have a mutual foe, whom both are sworn to crush, in Visconti, the Archbishop of Milan."

"Visconti! the most potent of the Italian princes. That he has justly incurred the wrath of the Church, I know, and I can readily understand that Innocent has revoked the pardon which the intrigues of the Archbishop purchased from Clement VI. But I do not see clearly why Montreal should willingly provoke so dark and terrible a foe."

Montreal smiled sternly. "Know you not," he said, "the vast ambition of that Visconti? By the Holy Sepulchre, he is precisely the enemy my soul leaps to meet! He has a genius worthy to cope with Montreal's. I have made myself master of his secret plans, — they are gigantic! In a word, the Archbishop designs the conquest of all Italy. His enormous wealth purchases the corrupt, his dark sagacity ensnares the credulous, his daring valor awes the weak. Every enemy he humbles, every ally he enslaves. This is precisely the Prince whose progress Walter de Montreal must arrest. For this," he said in a whisper, as to himself, "is precisely the Prince who, if suffered to extend his power, will frustrate the plans and break the force of Walter de Montreal."

Adrian was silent, and for the first time a suspicion of the real nature of the Provençal's designs crossed his breast.

"But, noble Montreal," resumed the Colonna, "give me, if your knowledge serves, as no doubt it does, — give me the latest tidings of my native city. I am Roman, and Rome is ever in my thoughts."

"And well she may," replied Montreal, quickly. "Thou knowest that Albornoz, as Legate of the Pontiff, led the army of the Church into the Papal Territories. He took with him

Cola di Rienzi. Arrived at Monte Fiascone, crowds of Romans of all ranks hastened thither to render homage to the Tribune. The Legate was forgotten in the popularity of his companion. Whether or not Albornoz grew jealous — for he is proud as Lucifer — of the respect paid to the Tribune, or whether he feared the restoration of his power, I cannot tell; but he detained him in his camp, and refused to yield him to all the solicitations and all the deputations of the Romans. Artfully, however, he fulfilled one of the real objects of Rienzi's release. Through his means he formally regained the allegiance of Rome to the Church, and by the attraction of his presence swelled his camp with Roman recruits. Marching to Viterbo, Rienzi distinguished himself greatly in deeds of arms against the tyrant[1] John di Vico. Nay, he fought as one worthy of belonging to the Grand Company. This increased the zeal of the Romans; and the city disgorged half its inhabitants to attend the person of the bold Tribune. To the entreaties of these worthy citizens (perhaps the very men who had before shut up their darling in St. Angelo) the crafty Legate merely replied, 'Arm against John di Vico, conquer the tyrants of the Territory, re-establish the patrimony of Saint Peter, and Rienzi shall then be proclaimed Senator, and return to Rome.'

"These words inspired the Romans with so great a zeal that they willingly lent their aid to the Legate. Aquapendente, Bolzena, yielded, John di Vico was half reduced and half terrified into submission, and Gabrielli, the tyrant of Agobbio, has since succumbed. The glory is to the Cardinal, but the merit with Rienzi."

"And now?"

"Albornoz continued to entertain the Senator-Tribune with great splendor and fair words, but not a word about restoring him to Rome. Wearied with this suspense, I have learned by secret intelligence that Rienzi has left the camp and betaken himself with a few attendants to Florence, where he has friends who will provide him with arms and money to enter Rome."

[1] Vita di Cola di Rienzi.

"Ah, then! now I guess," said Adrian, with a half smile, "for whom I was mistaken!"

Montreal blushed slightly. "Fairly conjectured!" said he.

"Meanwhile, at Rome," continued the Provençal, "at Rome, your worthy House and that of the Orsini, being elected to the supreme power, quarrelled among themselves, and could not keep the authority they had won. Francesco Baroncelli,[1] a new demagogue, a humble imitator of Rienzi, rose upon the ruins of the peace broken by the nobles, obtained the title of Tribune, and carried about the very insignia used by his predecessor. But less wise than Rienzi, he took the anti-papal party; and the Legate was thus enabled to play the papal demagogue against the usurper. Baroncelli was a weak man; his sons committed every excess, in mimicry of the high-born tyrants of Padau and Milan. Virgins violated and matrons dishonored, somewhat contrasted the solemn and majestic decorum of Rienzi's rule, — in fine, Baroncelli fell, massacred by the people. And now, if you ask what rules Rome, I answer, 'It is the hope of Rienzi.'"

[1] This Baroncelli, who has been introduced to the reader in a former portion of this work, is called by Matteo Villani "a man of vile birth and little learning; he had been a Notary of the Capitol."

In the midst of the armed dissensions between the Barons, which followed the expulsion of Rienzi, Baroncelli contrived to make himself master of the Capitol, and of what was considered an auxiliary of no common importance; namely, the *Great Bell*, by whose alarum Rienzi had so often summoned to arms the Roman people. Baroncelli was crowned Tribune, clothed in a robe of gold brocade, and invested with the crozier-sceptre of Rienzi. At first, his cruelty against the great took the appearance of protection to the humble; but the excesses of his sons (not exaggerated in the text), and his own brutal but bold ferocity, soon made him execrated by the people, to whom he owed his elevation. He had the folly to declare against the Pope; and this it really was that mainly induced Innocent to restore, and oppose to their new demagogue, the former and more illustrious Tribune. Baroncelli, like Rienzi, was excommunicated; and in his instance, also, the curse of the Church was the immediate cause of his downfall. In attempting flight he was massacred by the mob, December, 1353. Some, however, have maintained that he was slain in combat with Rienzi; and others, by a confusion of dates, have made him succeed to Rienzi on the *death* of the latter. (Matteo Villani, lib. iii. cap. 78; Osservaz. Stor. di Zefirino Re. MS. Vat. Rip. dal Bzovio, ann. 1353. N. 2.)

"A strange man, and various fortunes. What will be the end of both?"

"Swift murder to the first, and eternal fame to the last," answered Montreal, calmly. "Rienzi will be restored; that brave phœnix will wing its way, through storm and cloud, to its own funeral pyre: I foresee, I compassionate, I admire. And then," added Montreal, "I look *beyond!*"

"But wherefore feel you so certain that, if restored, Rienzi must fall?"

"Is it not clear to every eye, save his whom ambition blinds? How can mortal genius, however great, rule that most depraved people by popular means? The Barons (you know their indomitable ferocity), wedded to abuse, and loathing every semblance to law, — the Barons, humbled for a moment, will watch their occasion, and rise. The people will again desert. Or else, grown wise in one respect by experience, the new Senator will see that popular favor has a loud voice, but a recreant arm. He will, like the Barons, surround himself by foreign swords. A detachment from the Grand Company will be his courtiers; they will be his masters! To pay them the people must be taxed. Then the idol is execrated. No Italian hand can govern these hardy demons of the North; they will mutiny and fall away. A new demagogue will lead on the people, and Rienzi will be the victim. Mark my prophecy!"

"And then the 'beyond' to which you look?"

"Utter prostration of Rome for new and long ages, — God makes not two Rienzis; *or*," said Montreal, proudly, "the infusion of a new life into the worn-out and diseased frame, — the foundation of a new dynasty. Verily, when I look around me, I believe that the Ruler of nations designs the restoration of the South by the irruptions of the North, and that out of the old Franc and Germanic race will be built up the thrones of the future world!"

As Montreal thus spoke, leaning on his great war-sword, with his fair and heroic features, — so different, in their frank, bold, fearless expression, from the dark and wily intellect that characterizes the lineaments of the South, — eloquent at once with enthusiasm and thought, he might have seemed no unfitting

representative of the genius of that Northern chivalry of which he spake. And Adrian half fancied that he saw before him one of the old Gothic scourges of the Western World.

Their conversation was here interrupted by the sound of a trumpet, and presently an officer, entering, announced the arrival of ambassadors from Florence.

"Again you must pardon me, noble Adrian," said Montreal, "and let me claim you as my guest at least for to-night. Here you may rest secure, and on parting, my men shall attend you to the frontiers of whatsoever territory you design to visit."

Adrian, not sorry to see more of a man so celebrated, accepted the invitation.

Left alone, he leaned his head upon his hand, and soon became lost in his reflections.

CHAPTER III.

FAITHFUL AND ILL-FATED LOVE. — THE ASPIRATIONS SURVIVE THE AFFECTIONS.

Since that fearful hour in which Adrian Colonna had gazed upon the lifeless form of his adored Irene, the young Roman had undergone the usual vicissitudes of a wandering and adventurous life in those exciting times. His country seemed no longer dear to him. His very rank precluded him from the post he once aspired to take in restoring the liberties of Rome, and he felt that if ever such a revolution could be consummated, it was reserved for one in whose birth and habits the people could feel sympathy and kindred, and who could lift his hand in their behalf without becoming the apostate of his order and the judge of his own House. He had travelled through various courts, and served with renown in various fields. Beloved and honored wheresoever he fixed a temporary home, no change of scene had removed his melancholy, no new ties had chased

away the memory of the Lost. In that era of passionate and poetical romance, which Petrarch represented rather than created, Love had already begun to assume a more tender and sacred character than it had hitherto known; it had gradually imbibed the divine spirit which it derives from Christianity, and which associates its sorrows on earth with the visions and hopes of heaven. To him who relies upon immortality, fidelity to the dead is easy, because death cannot extinguish hope, and the soul of the mourner is already half in the world to come. It is an age that desponds of a future life, — representing death as an eternal separation, in which, if men grieve awhile for the dead, they hasten to reconcile themselves to the living. For true is the old aphorism, that love exists not without hope. And all that romantic worship which the Hermit of Vaucluse felt, or feigned, for Laura, found its temple in the desolate heart of Adrian Colonna. He was emphatically the lover of *his time!* Often as, in his pilgrimage from land to land, he passed the walls of some quiet and lonely convent, he seriously meditated the solemn vows, and internally resolved that the cloister should receive his maturer age. The absence of years had, however, in some degree restored the dimmed and shattered affection for his fatherland, and he desired once more to visit the city in which he first beheld Irene. "Perhaps," he thought, "time may have wrought some unlooked-for change; and I may yet assist to restore my country."

But with this lingering patriotism no ambition was mingled. In that heated stage of action, in which the desire of power seemed to stir through every breast, and Italy had become the El Dorado of wealth or the Utopia of empire to thousands of valiant arms and plotting minds, there was at least one breast that felt the true philosophy of the Hermit. Adrian's nature, though gallant and masculine, was singularly imbued with that elegance of temperament which recoils from rude contact, and to which a lettered and cultivated indolence is the supremest luxury. His education, his experience, and his intellect had placed him far in advance of his age, and he looked with a high contempt on the coarse villanies and base tricks by which Italian ambition sought its road to power. The rise and fall

of Rienzi, who, whatever his failings, was at least the purest and most honorable of the self-raised princes of the age, had conspired to make him despond of the success of noble, as he recoiled from that of selfish aspirations. And the dreamy melancholy which resulted from his ill-starred love yet more tended to wean him from the stale and hackneyed pursuits of the world. His character was full of beauty and of poetry, — not the less so in that it found not a vent for its emotions in the actual occupation of the poet! Pent within, those emotions diffused themselves over all his thoughts and colored his whole soul. Sometimes, in the blessed abstraction of his visions, he pictured to himself the lot he might have chosen had Irene lived and fate united them, — far from the turbulent and vulgar roar of Rome, but amidst some yet unpolluted solitude of the bright Italian soil. Before his eye there rose the lovely landscape, the palace by the borders of the waveless lake, the vineyards in the valley, the dark forests waving from the hill, and that home, the resort and refuge of all the minstrelsy and love of Italy, brightened by the "Lampeggiar dell' angelico riso,"[1] that makes a paradise in the face we love. Often, seduced by such dreams to complete oblivion of his loss, the young wanderer started from the ideal bliss, to behold around him the solitary waste of way, or the moonlit tents of war, or, worse than all, the crowds and revels of a foreign court.

Whether or not such fancies now, for a moment, allured his meditations, conjured up, perhaps, by the name of Irene's brother, which never sounded in his ears but to awaken ten thousand associations, the Colonna remained thoughtful and absorbed, until he was disturbed by his own squire, who, accompanied by Montreal's servitors, ushered in his solitary but ample repast. Flasks of the richest Florentine wines; viands prepared with all the art which, alas! Italy has now lost; goblets and salvers of gold and silver prodigally wrought with barbaric gems, — attested the princely luxury which reigned in the camp of the Grand Company. But Adrian saw in all only the spoliation of his degraded country, and felt the splendor almost as an insult. His lonely meal soon concluded,

[1] The splendor of the angel smile. — PETRARCH.

he became impatient of the monotony of his tent; and tempted by the cool air of the descending eve, sauntered carelessly forth. He bent his steps by the side of the brooklet that curved, snake-like and sparkling, by Montreal's tent; and finding a spot somewhat solitary and apart from the warlike tenements around, flung himself by the margin of the stream.

The last rays of the sun quivered on the wave that danced musically over its stony bed; and amidst a little copse on the opposite bank broke the brief and momentary song of such of the bolder habitants of that purple air as the din of the camp had not scared from their green retreat. The clouds lay motionless to the west, in that sky so darkly and intensely blue, never seen but over the landscapes that a Claude or a Rosa loved to paint; and dim and delicious rose-hues gathered over the gray peaks of the distant Apennines. From afar floated the hum of the camp, broken by the neigh of returning steeds, the blast of an occasional bugle, and, at regular intervals, by the armed tramp of the neighboring sentry. And opposite to the left of the copse — upon a rising ground matted with reeds, moss, and waving shrubs — were the ruins of some old Etruscan building, whose name had perished, whose very uses were unknown.

The scene was so calm and lovely, as Adrian gazed upon it, that it was scarcely possible to imagine it at that very hour the haunt of fierce and banded robbers, among most of whom the very soul of man was imbruted, and to all of whom murder or rapine made the habitual occupation of life.

Still buried in his reveries, and carelessly dropping stones into the noisy rivulet, Adrian was aroused by the sound of steps.

"A fair spot to listen to the lute and the ballads of Provence," said the voice of Montreal, as the Knight of St. John threw himself on the turf beside the young Colonna.

"You retain, then, your ancient love of your national melodies," said Adrian.

"Ay, I have not yet survived *all* my youth," answered Montreal, with a slight sigh. "But somehow or other, the strains that once pleased my fancy now go too directly to my heart.

So, though I still welcome *jongleur* and minstrel, I bid them sing their *newest* conceits. I cannot wish ever again to hear the poetry I heard when *I was young!*"

"Pardon me," said Adrian, with great interest, "but fain would I have dared, though a secret apprehension prevented me hitherto, — fain would I have dared to question you of that lovely lady, with whom, seven years ago, we gazed at moonlight upon the odorous orange-groves and rosy waters of Terracina."

Montreal turned away his face; he laid his hand on Adrian's arm, and murmured, in a deep and hoarse tone, "I am alone now!"

Adrian pressed his hand in silence. He felt no light shock at thus learning the death of one so gentle, so lovely, and so ill-fated.

"The vows of my knighthood," continued Montreal, "which precluded Adeline the rights of wedlock; the shame of her house; the angry grief of her mother; the wild vicissitudes of my life, so exposed to peril; the loss of her son, — all preyed silently on her frame. She did not die (die is too harsh a word!), but she drooped away, and glided into heaven. Even as on a summer's morn some soft dream fleets across us, growing less and less distinct until it fades, as it were, into light, and we awaken, so faded Adeline's parting spirit, till the daylight of God broke upon it."

Montreal paused a moment, and then resumed: "These thoughts make the boldest of us weak sometimes, and we Provençals are foolish in these matters! God wot, she was very dear to me!"

The Knight bent down and crossed himself devoutly, his lips muttered a prayer. Strange as it may seem to our more enlightened age, so martial a garb did morality then wear that this man, at whose word towns had blazed and torrents of blood had flowed, neither adjudged himself, nor was adjudged by the majority of his contemporaries, a criminal. His order, half monastic, half warlike, was emblematic of himself. He trampled upon man, yet humbled himself to God; nor had all his acquaintance with the refining scepticism of Italy shaken

the sturdy and simple faith of the bold Provençal. So far from recognizing any want of harmony between his calling and his creed, he held that man no true chevalier who was not as devout to the Cross as relentless with the sword.

"And you have no child save the one you lost?" asked Adrian, when he observed the wonted composure of Montreal once more returning.

"None!" said Montreal, as his brow again darkened. "No love-begotten heir of mine will succeed to the fortunes I trust yet to build. Never on earth shall I see upon the face of her child the likeness of Adeline! Yet at Avignon I saw a boy I would have claimed; for methought she must have looked her soul into his eyes, they were so like hers! Well, well! the Provence tree hath other branches, and some unborn nephew must be — what? The stars have not yet decided! But ambition is now the only thing in the world left me to love."

"So differently operates the same misfortune upon different characters," thought the Colonna. "To me, crowns became valueless when I could no longer dream of placing them on Irene's brow!"

The similarity of their fates, however, attracted Adrian strongly towards his host, and the two Knights conversed together with more friendship and unreserve than they had hitherto done. At length Montreal said, "By the way, I have not inquired your destination."

"I am bound to Rome," said Adrian; "and the intelligence I have learned from you incites me thitherward yet more eagerly. If Rienzi return, I may mediate successfully, perchance, between the Tribune-Senator and the nobles; and if I find my cousin, young Stefanello, now the head of our house, more tractable than his sires, I shall not despair of conciliating the less powerful Barons. Rome wants repose; and whoever governs, if he govern but with justice, ought to be supported both by prince and plebeian!"

Montreal listened with great attention, and then muttered to himself, "No, it cannot be!" He mused a little while, shading his brow with his hand, before he said aloud, "To Rome you are bound. Well, we shall meet soon amidst its ruins. Know,

by the way, that my object here is already won: these Florentine merchants have acceded to my terms; they have purchased a two years' peace; to-morrow the camp breaks up, and the Grand Company march to Lombardy. There, if my schemes prosper and the Venetians pay my price, I league the rascals (under Landau, my lieutenant) with the Sea-City, in defiance of the Visconti, and shall pass my autumn in peace amidst the pomps of Rome."

"Sir Walter de Montreal," said Adrian, "your frankness perhaps makes me presumptuous; but when I hear you talk, like a huxtering trader, of selling alike your friendship and your forbearance, I ask myself 'Is this the great Knight of St. John; and have men spoken of him fairly, when they assert the sole stain on his laurels to be his avarice?'"

Montreal bit his lip; nevertheless, he answered calmly, "My frankness has brought its own penance, Lord Adrian. However, I cannot wholly leave so honored a guest under an impression which I feel to be plausible, but not just. No, brave Colonna; report wrongs me. I value Gold, for Gold is the Architect of Power! It fills the camp, it storms the city, it buys the market-place, it raises the palace, it founds the throne. I value Gold; it is the means necessary to my end!"

"And that end —"

"Is — no matter what," said the Knight, coldly. "Let us to our tents; the dews fall heavily, and the malaria floats over these houseless wastes."

The pair rose; yet, fascinated by the beauty of the hour, they lingered for a moment by the brook. The earliest stars shone over its crisping wavelets, and a delicious breeze murmured gently amidst the glossy herbage.

"Thus gazing," said Montreal, softly, "we reverse the old Medusan fable the poets tell us of, and look and muse ourselves *out* of stone. A little while, and it was the *sunlight* that gilded the wave, — it now shines as brightly and glides as gayly beneath the *stars;* even so rolls the stream of time: one luminary succeeds the other, equally welcomed, equally illumining, equally evanescent! You see, the poetry of Provence still lives beneath my mail!"



Adrian early sought his couch; but his own thoughts and the sounds of loud mirth that broke from Montreal's tent, where the chief feasted the captains of his band, — a revel from which he had the delicacy to excuse the Roman noble, — kept the Colonna long awake; and he had scarcely fallen into an unquiet slumber, when yet more discordant sounds again invaded his repose. At the earliest dawn the wide armament was astir; the creaking of cordage, the tramp of men, loud orders and louder oaths, the slow rolling of baggage-wains, and the clank of the armorers announced the removal of the camp and the approaching departure of the Grand Company.

Ere Adrian was yet attired, Montreal entered his tent.

"I have appointed," he said, "five-score lances, under a trusty leader, to accompany you, noble Adrian, to the borders of Romagna; they wait your leisure. In another hour I depart; the on-guard are already in motion."

Adrian would fain have declined the proffered escort; but he saw that it would only offend the pride of the chief, who soon retired. Hastily Adrian endued his arms. The air of the fresh morning, and the glad sun rising gorgeously from the hills, revived his wearied spirit. He repaired to Montreal's tent, and found him alone, with the implements of writing before him, and a triumphant smile upon his countenance.

"Fortune showers new favors on me!" he said gayly. "Yesterday the Florentines spared me the trouble of a siege; and to-day (even since I last saw you, — a few minutes since) puts your new Senator of Rome into my power!"

"How! have your bands then arrested Rienzi?"

"Not so; better still! The Tribune changed his plan and repaired to Perugia, where my brothers now abide, — sought them. They have supplied him with money and soldiers enough to brave the perils of the way and to defy the swords of the Barons. So writes my good brother Arimbaldo, a man of letters, whom the Tribune thinks rightly he has decoyed with old tales of Roman greatness and mighty promises of grateful advancement. You find me hastily expressing my content at the arrangement. My brothers themselves will accompany the Senator-Tribune to the walls of the Capitol."

"Still, I see not how this places Rienzi in your power."

"No? His soldiers are my creatures, his comrades my brothers, his creditor myself! Let him rule Rome then: the time soon comes when the Vice-Regent must yield to —"

"The Chief of the Grand Company," interrupted Adrian, with a shudder, which the bold Montreal was too engrossed with the unconcealed excitement of his own thoughts to notice. "No, Knight of Provence, basely have we succumbed to domestic tyrants; but never, I trust, will Romans be so vile as to wear the yoke of a foreign usurper."

Montreal looked hard at Adrian, and smiled sternly.

"You mistake me," said he; "and it will be time enough for you to play the Brutus when I assume the Cæsar. Meanwhile we are but host and guest. Let us change the theme."

Nevertheless this, their latter conference, threw a chill over both during the short time the Knights remained together, and they parted with a formality which was ill suited to their friendly intercourse of the night before. Montreal felt he had incautiously revealed himself; but caution was no part of his character whenever he found himself at the head of an army and at the full tide of fortune, — and at that moment so confident was he of the success of his wildest schemes that he recked little whom he offended or whom alarmed.

Slowly, with his strange and ferocious escort, Adrian renewed his way. Winding up a steep ascent that led from the plain, when he reached the summit, the curve in the road showed him the whole army on its march, the gonfalons waving, the armor flashing in the sun, line after line, like a river of steel, and the whole plain bristling with the array of that moving war; while the solemn tread of the armed thousands fell subdued and stifled at times by martial and exulting music. As they swept on, Adrian descried at length the stately and towering form of Montreal upon a black charger, distinguished even at that distance from the rest not more by his gorgeous armor than his lofty stature. So swept he on in the pride of his array, in the flush of his hopes, — the head of a mighty armament, the terror of Italy, the hero that was, the monarch that might be!

BOOK IX.

THE RETURN.

ALLORA la sua venuta fu a Roma sentita; Romani si apparecchiavano a riceverlo con letizia, . . . furo fatti archi trionfali, etc. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. c. 17.

Then the fame of his coming was felt at Rome; the Romans made ready to receive him with gladness, . . . triumphal arches were erected, etc. — *Life of Cola di Rienzi.*

CHAPTER I.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRANCE.

ALL Rome was astir; from St. Angelo to the Capitol, windows, balconies, roofs, were crowded with animated thousands. Only here and there, in the sullen quarters of the Colonna, the Orsini, and the Savelli, reigned a death-like solitude and a dreary gloom. In those fortifications, rather than streets, not even the accustomed tread of the barbarian sentinel was heard. The gates closed, the casements barred, the grim silence around, attested the absence of the Barons. They had left the city so soon as they had learned the certain approach of Rienzi. In the villages and castles of the Campagna, surrounded by their mercenaries, they awaited the hour when the people, weary of their idol, should welcome back even those ferocious Iconoclasts.

With these exceptions, all Rome was astir. Triumphal arches of drapery, wrought with gold and silver, raised at every principal vista, were inscribed with mottoes of welcome and rejoicing. At frequent intervals stood youths and maidens, with baskets of flowers and laurels. High above the assembled

multitudes, from the proud tower of Hadrian, from the turrets of the Capitol, from the spires of the sacred buildings dedicated to Apostle and to Saint, floated banners as for a victory. Rome once more opened her arms to receive her Tribune!

Mingled with the crowd, disguised by his large mantle, hidden by the pressure of the throng, his person, indeed, forgotten by most, and in the confusion of the moment heeded by none, stood Adrian Colonna. He had not been able to conquer his interest for the brother of Irene. Solitary amidst his fellow-citizens he stood, — the only one of the proud race of Colonna who witnessed the triumph of the darling of the people.

"They say he has grown large in his prison," said one of the bystanders; "he was lean enough when he came by daybreak out of the church of St. Angelo!"

"Ay," said another, a little man with a shrewd, restless eye, "they say truly: I saw him take leave of the Legate."

Every eye was turned to the last speaker; he became at once a personage of importance. "Yes," continued the little man, with an elated and pompous air, "as soon, d'ye see, as he had prevailed on Messere Brettone and Messere Arimbaldo, the brothers of Fra Moreale, to accompany him from Perugia to Monte Fiascone, he went at once to the Legate d'Albornoz, who was standing in the open air conversing with his captains. A crowd followed. I was one of them; and the Tribune nodded at me — ay, that did he! — and so, with his scarlet cloak and his scarlet cap, he faced the proud Cardinal with a pride greater than his own. 'Monsignore,' said he, 'though you accord me neither money nor arms to meet the dangers of the road and brave the ambush of the Barons, I am prepared to depart. Senator of Rome his Holiness hath made me; according to custom, I pray you, Monsignore, forthwith to confirm the rank.' I would you could have seen how the proud Spaniard stared and blushed and frowned; but he bit his lip, and said little."

"And confirmed Rienzi Senator?"

"Yes; and blessed him, and bade him depart."

"Senator!" said a stalwart but gray-haired giant with folded

arms: "I like not a title that has been borne by a patrician. I fear me in the new title he will forget the old."

"Fie, Cecco del Vecchio, you were always a grumbler!" said a merchant of cloth, whose commodity the ceremonial had put in great request. "Fie! for my part, I think Senator a less new-fangled title than Tribune. I hope there will be feastings enow, at last. Rome has been long dull. A bad time for trade, I warrant me!"

The artisan grinned scornfully. He was one of those who distinguished between the middle class and the working, and he loathed a merchant as much as he did a noble. "The day wears," said the little man; "he must be here anon. The Senator's lady, and all his train, have gone forth to meet him these two hours."

Scarce were these words uttered when the crowd to the right swayed restlessly; and presently a horseman rode rapidly through the street. "Way there! Keep back! Way, make way for the Most Illustrious the Senator of Rome!"

The crowd became hushed, then murmuring, then hushed again. From balcony and casement stretched the neck of every gazer. The tramp of steeds was heard at a distance, the sound of clarion and trumpet; then, gleaming through the distant curve of the streets, was seen the wave of the gonfalons; then the glitter of spears; and then from the whole multitude, as from one voice, arose the shout: "He comes! he comes!"

Adrian shrank yet more backward amongst the throng, and leaning against the wall of one of the houses, contemplated the approaching pageant.

First came, six abreast, the procession of Roman horsemen who had gone forth to meet the Senator, bearing boughs of olive in their hands, each hundred preceded by banners inscribed with the words, "Liberty and peace restored." As these passed the group by Adrian, each more popular citizen of the cavalcade was recognized, and received with loud shouts. By the garb and equipment of the horsemen, Adrian saw that they belonged chiefly to the traders of Rome, — a race who, he well knew, unless strangely altered, valued liberty only as a commercial

speculation. "A vain support these," thought the Colonna. "What next?" On, then, came in glittering armor the German mercenaries, hired by the gold of the brothers of Provence, in number two hundred and fifty, and previously in the pay of Malatesta of Rimini, — tall, stern, sedate, disciplined, eyeing the crowd with a look, half of barbarian wonder, half of insolent disdain. No shout of gratulation welcomed these sturdy strangers; it was evident that their aspect cast a chill over the assembly.

"Shame!" growled Cecco del Vecchio, audibly. "Has the people's friend need of the swords which guard an Orsini or a Malatesta? Shame!"

No voice this time silenced the huge malcontent.

"His only real defence against the Barons," thought Adrian, "if he pay them well! But their number is not sufficient."

Next came two hundred *fantassins*, or foot-soldiers, of Tuscany, with the corselets and arms of the heavy-armed soldiery, — a gallant company, and whose cheerful looks and familiar bearing appeared to sympathize with the crowd. And in truth they did so, for they were Tuscans, and therefore lovers of freedom. In them, too the Romans seemed to recognize natural and legitimate allies, and there was a general cry of "Vivano i bravi Toscani!"

"Poor defence!" thought the more sagacious Colonna; "the Barons can awe and the mob corrupt them."

Next came a file of trumpeters and standard-bearers; and now the sound of the music was drowned by shouts which seemed to rise simultaneously as from every quarter of the city: "Rienzi! Rienzi! Welcome, welcome! Liberty and Rienzi! Rienzi and the Good Estate!" Flowers dropped on his path; kerchiefs and banners waved from every house; tears might be seen coursing, unheeded, down bearded cheeks; youth and age were kneeling together, with uplifted hands invoking blessings on the head of the Restored. On he came, the Senator-Tribune, — *"the Phœnix to his pyre!"*

Robed in scarlet that literally blazed with gold, his proud head bared in the sun, and bending to the saddle-bow, Rienzi passed slowly through the throng. Not in the flush of that

hour were visible on his glorious countenance the signs of disease and care; the very enlargement of his proportions gave a greater majesty to his mien. Hope sparkled in his eye, triumph and empire sat upon his brow. The crowd could not contain themselves; they pressed forward, each upon each, anxious to catch the glance of his eye, to touch the hem of his robe. He himself was deeply affected by their joy. He halted; with faltering and broken words he attempted to address them. "I am repaid," he said, — "repaid for all; may I live to make you happy!"

The crowd parted again; the Senator moved on; again the crowd closed in. Behind the Tribune, to their excited imagination, seemed to move the very goddess of ancient Rome.

Upon a steed caparisoned with cloth of gold, in snow-white robes studded with gems that flashed back the day, came the beautiful and regal Nina. The memory of her pride, her ostentation, all forgotten in that moment, she was scarce less welcome, scarce less idolized, than her lord. And her smile all radiant with joy, her lip quivering with proud and elate emotion, never had she seemed at once so born alike for love and for command, — a Zenobia passing through the pomp of Rome; not a captive, but a queen.

But not upon that stately form riveted the gaze of Adrian; pale, breathless, trembling, he clung to the walls against which he leaned. Was it a dream? Had the dead revived? Or was it his own, his living Irene, whose soft and melancholy loveliness shone sadly by the side of Nina, — a star beside the moon? The pageant faded from his eyes, all grew grim and dark. For a moment he was insensible. When he recovered, the crowd was hurrying along, confused and blent with the mighty stream that followed the procession. Through the moving multitude he caught the graceful form of Irene, again snatched by the closing standards of the procession from his view. His blood rushed back from his heart through every vein. He was as a man who for years had been in a fearful trance, and who is suddenly awakened to the light of heaven.

One of that mighty throng remained motionless with Adrian. It was Cecco del Vecchio.

"*He did not see me,*" muttered the smith to himself; "*old friends are forgotten now!* Well, well; Cecco del Vecchio hates tyrants still, no matter what their name, nor how smoothly they are disguised. He did not see ME! Umph!"

CHAPTER II.

THE MASQUERADE.

THE acuter reader has already learned, without the absolute intervention of the author as narrator, the incidents occurring to Rienzi in the interval between his acquittal at Avignon and his return to Rome. As the impression made by Nina upon the softer and better nature of Albornoz died away, he naturally began to consider his guest — as the profound politicians of that day ever considered men — a piece upon the great chess-board, to be moved, advanced, or sacrificed, as best suited the scheme in view. His purpose accomplished in the recovery of the Patrimonial Territory, the submission of John di Vico, and the fall and death of the demagogue Baroncelli, the Cardinal deemed it far from advisable to restore to Rome, and with so high a dignity, the able and ambitious Rienzi. Before the daring Roman even his own great spirit quailed, and he was wholly unable to conceive or to calculate the policy that might be adopted by the new Senator when once more lord of Rome. Without affecting to detain, he therefore declined to assist in restoring him. And Rienzi thus saw himself within an easy march of Rome, without one soldier to protect him against the Barons by the way. But Heaven had decreed that no *single* man, however gifted or however powerful, should long counteract or master the destinies of Rienzi; and perhaps in no more glittering scene of his life did he ever evince so dexterous and subtle an intellect as he now did in extricating himself from the wiles of the Cardinal. Repairing to Perugia, he had, as we have seen, procured, through the brothers of Montreal, men

and money for his return. But the Knight of St. John was greatly mistaken if he imagined that Rienzi was not thoroughly aware of the perilous and treacherous tenure of the support he had received. His keen eye read at a glance the aims and the characters of the brothers of Montreal; he knew that while affecting to serve him, they designed to control; that, made the debtor of the grasping and aspiring Montreal, and surrounded by the troops conducted by Montreal's brethren, he was in the midst of a net which, if not broken, would soon involve fortune and life itself in its fatal and deadly meshes. But confident in the resources and promptitude of his own genius, he yet sanguinely trusted to make those *his* puppets who dreamed that he was their own; and, with empire for the stake, he cared not how crafty the antagonists he was compelled to engage.

Meanwhile, uniting to all his rasher and all his nobler qualities a profound dissimulation, he appeared to trust implicitly to his Provençal companions; and his first act on entering the Capitol, after the triumphal procession, was to reward with the highest dignities in his gift Messere Arimbaldo and Messere Brettone de Montreal!

High feasting was there that night in the halls of the Capitol; but dearer to Rienzi than all the pomp of the day were the smiles of Nina. Her proud and admiring eyes, swimming with delicious tears, fixed upon his countenance, she but felt that they were re-united, and that the hours, however brilliantly illumined, were hastening to that moment when, after so desolate and dark an absence, they might once more be alone.

Far other the thoughts of Adrian Colonna as he sat alone in the dreary palace in the yet more dreary quarter of his haughty race. Irene then was alive, — he had been deceived by some strange error; she had escaped the devouring pestilence: and something in the pale sadness of her gentle features, even in that day of triumph, told him he was still remembered. But as his mind by degrees calmed itself from its first wild and tumultuous rapture, he could not help asking himself the question whether they were not still to be divided?

Stefanello Colonna, the grandson of the old Stephen and — by the death of his sire and brother — the youthful head of that powerful House, had already raised his standard against the Senator. Fortifying himself in the almost impregnable fastness of Palestrina, he had assembled around him all the retainers of his family, and his lawless soldiery now ravaged the neighboring plains far and wide.

Adrian foresaw that the lapse of a few days would suffice to bring the Colonna and the Senator to open war. Could he take part against those of his own blood? The very circumstance of his love for Irene would yet more rob such a proceeding of all appearance of disinterested patriotism, and yet more deeply and irremediably stain his knightly fame, wherever the sympathy of his equals was enlisted with the cause of the Colonna. On the other hand, not only his love for the Senator's sister, but his own secret inclinations and honest convictions were on the side of one who alone seemed to him possessed of the desire and the genius to repress the disorders of his fallen city. Long meditating, he feared no alternative was left him but in the same cruel neutrality to which he had been before condemned; but he resolved at least to make the attempt — rendered favorable and dignified by his birth and reputation — to reconcile the contending parties. To affect this, he saw that he must begin with his haughty cousin. He was well aware that were it known that he had first obtained an interview with Rienzi, did it appear as if he were charged with overtures from the Senator, although Stefanello himself might be inclined to yield to his representations, the insolent and ferocious Barons who surrounded him would not deign to listen to the envoy of the People's chosen one; and instead of being honored as an intercessor, he should be suspected as a traitor. He determined, then, to depart for Palestrina; but (and his heart beat audibly) would it not be possible first to obtain an interview with Irene? It was no easy enterprise, surrounded as she was; but he resolved to adventure it. He summoned Giulio.

"The Senator holds a festival this evening: think you that the assemblage will be numerous?"

"I hear," answered Giulio, "that the banquet given to the Ambassadors and Signors to-day is to be followed to-morrow by a mask, to which all ranks are admitted. By Bacchus,[1] if the Tribune only invited nobles, the smallest closet in the Capitol would suffice to receive his maskers. I suppose a mask has been resolved on in order to disguise the quality of the visitors."

Adrian mused a moment; and the result of his revery was a determination to delay for another sun his departure to Palestrina, to take advantage of the nature of the revel, and to join the masquerade.

That species of entertainment, though unusual at that season of the year, had been preferred by Rienzi, partly and ostensibly because it was one in which all his numerous and motley supporters could be best received, but chiefly and secretly because it afforded himself and his confidential friends the occasion to mix unsuspected amongst the throng, and learn more of the real anticipations of the Romans with respect to his policy and his strength than could well be gathered from the enthusiasm of a public spectacle.

The following night was beautifully serene and clear. The better to accommodate the numerous guests, and to take advantage of the warm and moonlit freshness of the air, the open court of the Capitol, with the place of the Lion (as well as the state apartments within), was devoted to the festival.

As Adrian entered the festive court with the rush of the throng, it chanced that in the eager impatience of some maskers, more vehement than the rest, his vizard was deranged. He hastily replaced it, but not before one of the guests had recognized his countenance.

From courtesy, Rienzi and his family remained at first unmasked. They stood at the head of the stairs to which the old Egyptian Lion gave the name. The lights shone over the colossal monument, which, torn from its antique home, had witnessed, in its grim repose, the rise and lapse of countless generations, and the dark and stormy revolutions of avenging

[1] Still a common Roman expletive.

fate. It was an ill omen, often afterwards remarked, that the place of that state festival was the place also of the state executions. But at that moment, as group after group pressed forward to win smile and word from the celebrated man whose fortunes had been the theme of Europe, or to bend in homage to the lustrous loveliness of Nina, no omen and no warning clouded the universal gladness.

Behind Nina, well contented to shrink from the gaze of the throng, and to feel her softer beauty eclipsed by the dazzling and gorgeous charms of her brother's wife, stood Irene. Amidst the crowd, on her alone Adrian fixed his eyes. The years which had flown over the fair brow of the girl of sixteen — then animated by, yet trembling beneath, the first wild breath of Love, youth in every vein, passion and childish tenderness in every thought — had not marred, but they had changed, the character of Irene's beauty. Her cheek, no longer varying with every instant, was settled into a delicate and thoughtful paleness; her form, more rounded to the proportions of Roman beauty, had assumed an air of dignified and calm repose. No longer did the restless eye wander in search of some imagined object, no longer did the lip quiver into smiles at some untold hope or half-unconscious recollection. A grave and mournful expression gave to her face (still how sweet!) a gravity beyond her years. The bloom, the flush, the April of the heart, was gone; but yet neither time, nor sorrow, nor blighted love had stolen from her countenance its rare and angelic softness, nor that inexpressible and virgin modesty of form and aspect which, contrasting the bolder beauties of Italy, had more than aught else distinguished to Adrian, from all other women, the idol of his heart. And feeding his gaze upon those dark, deep eyes, which spoke of thought far away and busy with the past, Adrian felt again and again that he was not forgotten! Hovering near her, but suffering the crowd to press one after another before him, he did not perceive that he had attracted the eagle eye of the Senator.

In fact, as one of the maskers passed Rienzi, he had whispered: "Beware, a Colonna is among the masks! beneath the

reveller's domino has often lurked the assassin's dagger. Yonder stands your foe, — mark him!"

These words were the first sharp and thrilling intimation of the perils into which he had rushed that the Tribune-Senator had received since his return. He changed color slightly; and for some minutes the courtly smile and ready greeting, with which he had hitherto delighted every guest, gave way to a moody abstraction.

"Why stands yon strange man so mute and motionless?" whispered he to Nina. "He speaks to none, he approaches us not. A churl, a churl, — he must be seen to!"

"Doubtless some German or English barbarian," answered Nina. "Let not, my lord, so slight a cloud dim your merriment."

"You are right, dearest, — we have friends here; we are well girt. And, by my father's ashes, I feel that I must accustom myself to danger! Nina, let us move on; methinks we might now mix among the maskers, masked ourselves."

The music played loud and cheerily as the Senator and his party mingled with the throng. But still his eye turned ever towards the gray domino of Adrian, and he perceived that it followed his steps. Approaching the private entrance of the Capitol, he for a few minutes lost sight of his unwelcome pursuer; but just as he entered, turning abruptly, Rienzi perceived him close at his side: the next moment the stranger had vanished amidst the throng. But that moment had sufficed to Adrian, — he had reached Irene. "Adrian Colonna," he whispered, "waits thee beside the Lion."

In the absorption of his own reflections, Rienzi fortunately did not notice the sudden paleness and agitation of his sister. Entered within his palace, he called for wine. The draught revived his spirits; he listened smilingly to the sparkling remarks of Nina; and enduing his mask and disguise, said with his wonted cheerfulness: "Now for Truth! Strange that in festivals it should only speak behind a vizard! My sweet sister, thou hast lost thine old smile, and I would rather see that than — Ha! has Irene vanished?"

"Only, I suppose, to change her dress, my Cola, and mingle

with the revellers," answered Nina. "Let my smile atone for hers."

Rienzi kissed the bright brow of his wife as she clung fondly to his bosom. "Thy smile is the sunlight," said he, "but this girl disturbs me. Methinks *now*, at least, she might wear a gladder aspect."

"Is there nothing of love beneath my fair sister's gloom?" answered Nina. "Do you not call to mind how she loved Adrian Colonna?"

"Does that fantasy hold still?" returned Rienzi, musingly. "Well, and she is fit bride for a monarch."

"Yet it were an alliance that would, better than one with monarchs, strengthen thy power at Rome."

"Ay, were it possible; but that haughty race! Perchance this very masker that so haunted our steps was but her lover. I will look to this. Let us forth, my Nina. Am I well cloaked?"

"Excellently well! And I?"

"The sun behind a cloud."

"Ah! let us not tarry long. What hour of revel like that when, thy hand in mine, this head upon thy bosom, we forget the sorrows we have known, and even the triumphs we have shared?"

Meanwhile Irene, confused and lost amidst a transport of emotion, already disguised and masked, was threading her way through the crowd back to the staircase of the Lion. With the absence of the Senator that spot had been comparatively deserted; music and the dance attracted the maskers to another quarter of the wide space. And Irene, now approaching, beheld the moonlight fall over the statue, and a solitary figure leaning against the pedestal. She paused, the figure approached, and again she heard the voice of her early love.

"Oh, Irene, recognized even in this disguise!" said Adrian, seizing her trembling hand, "have I lived to gaze again upon that form, to touch this hand? Did not these eyes behold thee lifeless in that fearful vault which I shudder to recall? By what miracle wert thou raised again? By what means did

Heaven spare to this earth one that it seemed already to have placed amongst its angels?"

"Was this indeed thy belief?" said Irene, falteringly, but with an accent eloquent of joy. "Thou didst not then willingly desert me? Unjust that I was, I wronged thy noble nature, and deemed that my brother's fall, my humble lineage, thy brilliant fate, had made thee renounce Irene!"

"Unjust indeed!" answered the lover. "But surely I saw thee amongst the dead! Thy cloak, with the silver stars,— who else wore the arms of the Roman Tribune?"

"Was it but the cloak then, which, dropped in the streets, was probably assumed by some more ill-fated victim,— was it *that* sight alone that made thee so soon despair? Ah! Adrian," continued Irene, tenderly, but with reproach, "not even when I saw *thee* seemingly lifeless on the couch by which I had watched three days and nights, not even then did *I* despair!"

"What, then, my vision did not deceive me? It was you who watched by my bed in that grim hour, whose love guarded, whose care preserved me? And I, wretch that I was!—"

"Nay," answered Irene, "your thought was natural. Heaven seemed to endow me with superhuman strength whilst I was necessary to thee. But judge of my dismay. I left thee to seek the good friar who attended thee as thy leech; I returned, and found thee not. Heart-sick and terrified, I searched the desolate city in vain. Strong as I was while hope supported me, I sank beneath fear. And my brother found me, senseless and stretched on the ground, by the church of St. Mark."

"The church of St. Mark! So foretold his dream!"

"He had told me he had met thee; we searched for thee in vain. At length we heard that thou hadst left the city, and— and— I rejoiced, Adrian, but I repined!"

For some minutes the young lovers surrendered themselves to the delight of re-union, while new explanations called forth new transports.

"And now," murmured Irene, "now that we have met—" She paused, and her mask concealed her blushes.

"Now that we have met," said Adrian, filling up the silence, "wouldst thou say further, 'that we should not part'? Trust me, dearest, that is the hope that animates my heart. It was but to enjoy these brief, bright moments with thee that I delayed my departure to Palestrina. Could I but hope to bring my young cousin into amity with thy brother, no barrier would prevent our union. Willingly I forget the past, — the death of my unhappy kinsmen (victims, it is true, to their own faults); and, perhaps, amidst all the crowds that hailed his return, none more appreciated the great and lofty qualities of Cola di Rienzi than did Adrian Colonna."

"If this be so," said Irene, "let me hope the best. Meanwhile, it is enough of comfort and of happiness to know that we love each other as of old. Ah! Adrian, I am sadly changed, and often have I thought it a thing beyond my dreams that thou shouldst see me again and love me still."

"Fairer art thou and lovelier than ever," answered Adrian, passionately; "and time, which has ripened thy bloom, has but taught me more deeply to feel thy value. Farewell, Irene! I linger here no longer; thou wilt, I trust, hear soon of my success with my House, and ere the week be over I may return to claim thy hand in the face of day."

The lovers parted; Adrian lingered on the spot, and Irene hastened to bury her emotion and her raptures in her own chamber.

As her form vanished, and the young Colonna slowly turned away, a tall mask strode abruptly towards him.

"Thou art a Colonna," it said, "and in the power of the Senator. Dost thou tremble?"

"If I be a Colonna, rude masker," answered Adrian, coldly, "thou shouldst know the old proverb: 'He who stirs the column shall rue the fall.'"

The stranger laughed aloud, and then, lifting his mask, Adrian saw that it was the Senator who stood before him.

"My Lord Adrian di Castello," said Rienzi, resuming all his gravity, "is it as friend or foe that you have honored our revels this night?"

"Senator of Rome," answered Adrian, with equal stateliness,

"I partake of no man's hospitality but as a friend. A foe, at least to you, I trust never justly to be esteemed."

"I would," rejoined Rienzi, "that I could apply to myself unreservedly that most flattering speech. Are these friendly feelings entertained towards me as the Governor of the Roman people, or as the brother of the woman who has listened to your vows?"

Adrian, who when the Senator had unmasked had followed his example, felt at these words that his eye quailed beneath Rienzi's. However, he recovered himself with the wonted readiness of an Italian, and replied laconically, —

"As both."

"Both!" echoed Rienzi. "Then, indeed, noble Adrian, you are welcome hither. And yet, methinks, if you conceived there was no cause for enmity between us, you would have wooed the sister of Cola di Rienzi in a guise more worthy of your birth and, permit me to add, of that station which God, destiny, and my country have accorded unto *me*. You dare not, young Colonna, meditate dishonor to the sister of the Senator of Rome. High-born as you are, she is your equal."

"Were I the Emperor, whose simple knight I but am, your sister were my equal," answered Adrian, warmly. "Rienzi, I grieve that I am discovered to you yet. I had trusted that, as a mediator between the Barons and yourself, I might first have won your confidence, and then claimed my reward. Know that with to-morrow's dawn I depart for Palestrina, seeking to reconcile my young cousin to the choice of the People and the Pontiff. Various reasons, which I need not now detail, would have made me wish to undertake this heraldry of peace without previous communication with you. But since we *have* met, intrust me with any terms of conciliation, and I pledge you the right hand, not of a Roman noble, — alas! the *prisca fides* has departed from that pledge, — but of a Knight of the Imperial Court, that I will not betray your confidence."

Rienzi, accustomed to read the human countenance, had kept his eyes intently fixed upon Adrian while he spoke; when the Colonna concluded, he pressed the proffered hand, and said,

with that familiar and winning sweetness which at times was so peculiar to his manner, —

"I trust you, Adrian, from my soul. You were mine early friend in calmer, perchance happier, years. And never did river reflect the stars more clearly than your heart then mirrored back the truth. I trust you!"

While thus speaking, he had mechanically led back the Colonna to the statue of the Lion; there pausing, he resumed: —

"Know that I have this morning despatched my delegate to your cousin Stefanello. With all due courtesy, I have apprised him of my return to Rome, and invited hither his honored presence. Forgetting all ancient feuds, mine own past exile, I have assured him, here, the station and dignity due to the head of the Colonna. All that I ask in return is obedience to the law. Years and reverses have abated my younger pride; and though I may yet preserve the sternness of the Judge, none shall hereafter complain of the insolence of the Tribune."

"I would," answered Adrian, "that your mission to Stefanello had been delayed a day; I would fain have forestalled its purport. Howbeit, you increase my desire of departure. Should I yet succeed in obtaining an honorable and peaceful reconciliation, it is not in disguise that I will woo your sister."

"And never did Colonna," replied Rienzi, loftily, "bring to his House a maiden whose alliance more gratified ambition. I still see, as I have seen ever, in mine own projects and mine own destinies the chart of the new Roman Empire!"

"Be not too sanguine yet, brave Rienzi," replied Adrian, laying his hand on the Lion of Basalt: "bethink thee on how many scheming brains this dumb image of stone hath looked down from its pedestal, — schemes of sand, and schemers of dust. Thou hast enough, at present, for the employ of all thine energy, — not to extend thy power, but to preserve thyself. For, trust me, never stood human greatness on so wild and dark a precipice!"

"Thou art honest," said the Senator; "and these are the first words of doubt, and yet of sympathy, I have heard in Rome. But the People love me, the Barons have fled from

Rome, the Pontiff approves, and the swords of the Northmen guard the avenues of the Capitol. But these are nought; in mine own honesty are my spear and buckler. "Oh, never," continued Rienzi, kindling with enthusiasm, "never since the days of the old Republic, did Roman dream a purer and a brighter aspiration than that which animates and supports me now! Peace restored, law established, art, letters, intellect, dawning upon the night of time; the Patricians, no longer bandits of rapine, but the guards of order; the People ennobled from a mob, brave to protect, enlightened to guide, themselves. Then, not by the violence of arms, but by the majesty of her moral power, shall the Mother of Nations claim the obedience of her children. Thus dreaming and thus hoping, shall I tremble or despond? No, Adrian Colonna; come weal or woe, I abide, unshrinking and unawed, by the chances of my doom!"

So much did the manner and the tone of the Senator exalt his language that even the sober sense of Adrian was enchanted and subdued. He kissed the hand he held, and said earnestly, —

"A doom that I will deem it my boast to share, — a career that it will be my glory to smooth. If I succeed in my present mission —"

"You are my brother!" said Rienzi.

"If I fail?"

"You may equally claim that alliance. You pause, you change color."

"Can I desert my House?"

"Young lord," said Rienzi, loftily, "say rather can you desert your country. If you doubt my honesty, if you fear my ambition, desist from your task, rob me not of a single foe. But if you believe that I have the will and the power to serve the state; if you recognize, even in the reverses and calamities I have known and mastered, the protecting hand of the Saviour of nations; if those reverses were but the mercies of Him who chasteneth, necessary, it may be, to correct my earlier daring and sharpen yet more my intellect; if, in a word, thou believest me one whom, whatever be his faults,

God hath preserved for the sake of Rome, — forget that you are a Colonna, remember only that you are a Roman!"

"You have conquered me, strange and commanding spirit," said Adrian, in a low voice, completely carried away; "and whatever the conduct of my kindred, I am yours and Rome's. Farewell!"

CHAPTER III.

ADRIAN'S ADVENTURES AT PALESTRINA.

It was yet noon when Adrian beheld before him the lofty mountains that shelter Palestrina, — the Præneste of the ancient world. Back to a period before Romulus existed, in the earliest ages of that mysterious civilization which in Italy preceded the birth of Rome, could be traced the existence and the power of that rocky city. Eight dependent towns owned its sway and its wealth; its position and the strength of those mighty walls, in whose ruins may yet be traced the masonry of the remote Pelasgi, had long braved the ambition of the neighboring Rome. From that very citadel — the Mural Crown[1] of the mountain — had waved the standard of Marius; and up the road which Adrian's scanty troop slowly wound, had echoed the march of the murderous Sylla, on his return from the Mithridatic war. Below, where the city spreads towards the plain, were yet seen the shattered and roofless columns of the once celebrated Temple of Fortune; and still the immemorial olives clustered gray and mournfully around the ruins.

A more formidable hold the Barons of Rome could not have selected; and as Adrian's military eye scanned the steep ascent and the rugged walls, he felt that with ordinary skill it might defy for months all the power of the Roman Senator. Below,

[1] Hence, apparently, its Greek name of Stephane. Palestrina is yet one of the many proofs which the vicinity of Rome affords of the old Greek civilization of Italy.

in the fertile valley, dismantled cottages and trampled harvests attested the violence and rapine of the insurgent Barons; and at that very moment were seen, in the old plain of the warlike Hernici, troops of armed men driving before them herds of sheep and cattle, collected in their lawless incursions. In sight of that Præneste which had been the favorite retreat of the luxurious lords of Rome in its most polished day, the Age of Iron seemed renewed.

The banner of the Colonna, borne by Adrian's troop, obtained ready admittance at the Porta del Sole. As he passed up the irregular and narrow streets that ascended to the citadel, groups of foreign mercenaries, half-ragged, half-tawdry knots of abandoned women, mixed here and there with the liveries of the Colonna, stood loitering amidst the ruins of ancient fanes and palaces, or basked lazily in the sun upon terraces through which, from amidst weeds and grass, glowed the imperishable hues of the rich mosaics which had made the pride of that lettered and graceful nobility of whom savage freebooters were now the heirs.

The contrast between the Past and the Present forcibly occurred to Adrian as he passed along; and despite his order, he felt as if Civilization itself were enlisted against his House upon the side of Rienzi.

Leaving his train in the court of the citadel, Adrian demanded admission to the presence of his cousin. He had left Stefanello a child on his departure from Rome, and there could therefore be but a slight and unfamiliar acquaintance betwixt them, despite their kindred.

Peals of laughter came upon his ear as he followed one of Stefanello's gentlemen through a winding passage that led to the principal chamber. The door was thrown open, and Adrian found himself in a rude hall, to which some appearance of hasty state and attempted comfort had been given. Costly arras imperfectly clothed the stone walls, and the rich seats and decorated tables, which the growing civilization of the northern cities of Italy had already introduced into the palaces of Italian nobles, strangely contrasted the rough pavement, spread with heaps of armor negligently piled around. At the

farther end of the apartment, Adrian shudderingly perceived, set in due and exact order, the implements of torture.

Stefanello Colonna, with two other Barons, indolently reclined on seats drawn around a table, in the recess of a deep casement, from which might be still seen the same glorious landscape, bounded by the dim spires of Rome, which Hannibal and Pyrrhus had ascended that very citadel to survey!

Stefanello himself, in the first bloom of youth, bore already on his beardless countenance those traces usually the work of the passions and vices of maturest manhood. His features were cast in the mould of the old Stephen's; in their clear, sharp, high-bred outline might be noticed that regular and graceful symmetry which blood, in men as in animals, will sometimes entail through generations; but the features were wasted and meagre. His brows were knit in an eternal frown; his thin and bloodless lips wore that insolent contempt which seems so peculiarly cold and unlovely in early youth; and the deep and livid hollows round his eyes spoke of habitual excess and premature exhaustion. By him sat, reconciled by hatred to one another, the hereditary foes of his race; the soft, but cunning and astute, features of Luca di Savelli contrasted with the broad frame and ferocious countenance of the Prince of the Orsini.

The young head of the Colonna rose with some cordiality to receive his cousin. "Welcome," he said, "dear Adrian; you are arrived in time to assist us with your well-known military skill. Think you not we shall stand a long siege, if the insolent plebeian dare adventure it? You know our friends, the Orsini and the Savelli? Thanks to Saint Peter, or Peter's delegate, we have now happily meaner throats to cut than those of each other!"

Thus saying, Stefanello again threw himself listlessly on his seat, and the shrill, woman's voice of Savelli took part in the dialogue.

"I would, noble Signor, that you had come a few hours earlier; we are still making merry at the recollection, — he, he, he!"

"Ah! excellent," cried Stefanello, joining in the laugh; "our



cousin has had a loss. Know, Adrian, that this base fellow, whom the Pope has had the impudence to create Senator, dared but yesterday to send us a varlet, whom he called — by Our Lady! — his *ambassador!*"

"Would you could have seen his mantle, Signor Adrian!" chimed in the Savelli, — "purple velvet, as I live, decorated in gold, with the arms of Rome. We soon spoiled his finery."

"What!" exclaimed Adrian, "you did not break the laws of all nobility and knighthood, — you offered no insult to a herald?"

"Herald, sayest thou?" cried Stefanello, frowning till his eyes were scarce visible. "It is for Princes and Barons alone to employ heralds. An I had had my will, I would have sent back the minion's head to the usurper."

"What did ye then?" asked Adrian, coldly.

"Bade our swineherds dip the fellow in the ditch, and gave him a night's lodging in a dungeon to dry himself withal."

"And this morning, — he, he, he!" added the Savelli, — "we had him before us, and drew his teeth, one by one. I would you could have heard the fellow mumble out for mercy!"

Adrian rose hastily, and struck the table fiercely with his gauntlet.

"Stefanello Colonna," said he, coloring with noble rage, "answer me: did you dare to inflict this indelible disgrace upon the name we jointly bear? Tell me at least that you protested against this foul treason to all the laws of civilization and of honor. You answer not. House of the Colonna, can such be thy representative!"

"To me these words!" said Stefanello, trembling with passion. "Beware! Methinks *thou* art the traitor, leagued perhaps with yon rascal mob. Well do I remember that thou, the betrothed of the Demagogue's sister, didst not join with my uncle and my father of old, but didst basely leave the city to her plebeian tyrant."

"That did he!" said the fierce Orsini, approaching Adrian menacingly, while the gentle cowardice of Savelli sought in

vain to pluck him back by the mantle — "that did he! and but for thy presence, Stefanello —"

"Coward and blusterer!" interrupted Adrian, fairly beside himself with indignation and shame, and dashing his gauntlet in the very face of the advancing Orsini — "wouldst thou threaten one who has maintained, in every list of Europe and against the stoutest Chivalry of the North, the honor of Rome, which thy deeds the while disgraced? By this gage, I spit upon and defy thee. With lance and with brand, on horse and on foot, I maintain against thee and all thy line that thou art no knight to have thus maltreated, in thy strongholds, a peaceful and unarmed herald. Yes, even here, on the spot of thy disgrace, I challenge thee to arms!"

"To the court below! Follow me," said Orsini, sullenly, and striding towards the threshold. "What ho, there! my helmet and breastplate!"

"Stay, noble Orsini," said Stefanello. "The insult offered to thee is my quarrel, — mine was the deed; and against me speaks this degenerate scion of our line. Adrian di Castello, sometime called Colonna, surrender your sword: you are my prisoner!"

"Oh!" said Adrian, grinding his teeth, "that my ancestral blood did not flow through thy veins; else — but enough! Me, your equal, and the favored Knight of the Emperor, whose advent now brightens the frontiers of Italy! me you dare not detain. For your friends, I shall meet them yet, perhaps, ere many days are over, where none shall separate our swords. Till then remember, Orsini, that it is against no unpractised arm that thou wilt have to redeem thine honor!"

Adrian, his drawn sword in his hand, strode towards the door, and passed the Orsini, who stood, lowering and irresolute, in the centre of the apartment.

Savelli whispered Stefanello. "He says, 'Ere many days be past!' Be sure, dear Signor, that he goes to join Rienzi. Remember, the alliance he once sought with the Tribune's sister may be renewed. Beware of him! Ought he to leave the castle? The name of a Colonna, associated with the mob, would distract and divide half our strength."

"Fear me not," returned Stefanello, with a malignant smile. "Ere you spoke, I had determined!"

The young Colonna lifted the arras from the wall, opened a door, and passed into a low hall, in which sat twenty mercenaries.

"Quick!" said he. "Seize and disarm yon stranger in the green mantle, but slay him not. Bid the guard below find dungeons for his train. Quick! ere he reach the gate."

Adrian had gained the open hall below — his train and his steed were in sight in the court — when suddenly the soldiery of the Colonna, rushing through another passage than that which he had passed, surrounded and intercepted his retreat.

"Yield thee, Adrian di Castello," cried Stefanello from the summit of the stairs, "or your blood be on your own head."

Three steps did Adrian make through the press, and three of his enemies fell beneath his sword. "To the rescue!" he shouted to his band; and already those bold and daring troopers had gained the hall. Presently the alarum-bell tolled loud, the court swarmed with soldiers. Oppressed by numbers, beat down rather than subdued, Adrian's little train was soon secured, and the flower of the Colonna, wounded, breathless, disarmed, but still uttering loud defiance, was a prisoner in the fortress of his kinsman.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POSITION OF THE SENATOR. — THE WORK OF YEARS. — THE REWARDS OF AMBITION.

The indignation of Rienzi may readily be conceived on the return of his herald, mutilated and dishonored. His temper, so naturally stern, was rendered yet more hard by the remembrance of his wrongs and trials; and the result which attended his overtures of conciliation to Stefanello Colonna stung him to the soul.

The bell of the Capitol tolled to arms within ten minutes after the return of the herald; the great gonfalon of Rome was unfurled on the highest tower; and the very evening after Adrian's arrest, the forces of the Senator, headed by Rienzi in person, were on the road to Palestrina. The troopers of the Barons had, however, made incursions as far as Tivoli with the supposed connivance of the inhabitants, and Rienzi halted at that beautiful spot to raise recruits and receive the allegiance of the suspected, while his soldiers, with Arimbaldo and Brettone at their head, went in search of the marauders. The brothers of Montreal returned late at night with the intelligence that the troopers of the Barons had secured themselves amidst the recesses of the wood of Pantano.

The red spot mounted to Rienzi's brow. He gazed hard at Brettone, who stated the news to him, and a natural suspicion shot across his mind.

"How, escaped?" he said. "Is it possible? Enough of such idle skirmishes with these lordly robbers! Will the hour ever come when I shall meet them hand to hand? Brettone," and the brother of Montreal felt the dark eye of Rienzi pierce to his very heart, "Brettone!" said he, with an abrupt change of voice, "are your men to be *trusted?* Is there no connivance with the Barons?"

"How?" said Brettone, sullenly, but somewhat confused.

"How me no hows!" quoth the Tribune-Senator, fiercely. "I know that thou art a valiant captain of valiant men. Thou and thy brother Arimbaldo have served me well, and I have rewarded ye well. Have I not? Speak!"

"Senator," answered Arimbaldo, taking up the word, "you have kept your word to us. You have raised us to the highest rank your power could bestow, and this has amply atoned our humble services."

"I am glad ye allow thus much," said the Tribune.

Arimbaldo proceeded, somewhat more loftily, "I trust, my lord, you do not doubt us?"

"Arimbaldo," replied Rienzi, in a voice of deep, but half-suppressed emotion; "you are a lettered man, and you have seemed to share my projects for the regeneration of our common

kind. *You* ought not to betray me. There is something in unison between *us*. But chide me not; I am surrounded by treason, and the very air I breathe seems poison to my lips."

There was a pathos mingled with Rienzi's words which touched the milder brother of Montreal. He bowed in silence. Rienzi surveyed him wistfully, and sighed. Then, changing the conversation, he spoke of their intended siege of Palestrina, and shortly afterwards retired to rest.

Left alone, the brothers regarded each other for some moments in silence. "Brettone," said Arimbaldo at length, in a whispered voice, "my heart misgives me. I like not Walter's ambitious schemes. With our own countrymen we are frank and loyal: why play the traitor with this high-souled Roman?"[1]

"Tush!" said Brettone. "Our brother's hand of iron alone can sway this turbulent people; and if Rienzi be betrayed, so also are his enemies, the Barons. No more of this! I have tidings from Montreal; he will be in Rome in a few days."

"And then?"

"Rienzi weakened by the Barons (for he must not conquer), the Barons weakened by Rienzi, our Northmen seize the Capitol, and the soldiery, now scattered throughout Italy, will fly to the standard of the Great Captain. Montreal must be first Podesta, then King, of Rome."

Arimbaldo moved restlessly in his seat, and the brethren conferred no more on their projects.

The situation of Rienzi was precisely that which tends the most to sour and to harden the fairest nature. With an intellect capable of the grandest designs, a heart that beat with the loftiest emotions, elevated to the sunny pinnacle of power and surrounded by loud-tongued adulators, he knew not among men a single breast in which he could confide. He was as one on a steep ascent whose footing crumbles, while every bough at which he grasps seems to rot at his touch. He found the

[1] The anonymous biographer of Rienzi makes the following just remark: "Sono li tedeschi, come discendon de la Alemagna, semplici, puri, senza fraude, come si allocano tra' taliani, diventano mastri coduti, viziosi, che sentono ogni malizia" (*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 16).

people more than ever eloquent in his favor, but while they shouted raptures as he passed, not a man was capable of *making a sacrifice for him!* The liberty of a state is never achieved by a single individual; if not the people — if not the greater number — a zealous and fervent minority at least must go hand in hand with him. Rome demanded sacrifices in all who sought the Roman regeneration, — sacrifices of time, ease, and money. The crowd followed the procession of the Senator, but not a single Roman devoted his life, *unpaid*, to his standard; not a single coin was subscribed in the defence of freedom. Against him were arrayed the most powerful and the most ferocious Barons of Italy, each of whom could maintain, at his own cost, a little army of practised warriors. With Rienzi were traders and artificers who were willing to enjoy the fruits of liberty, but not to labor at the soil; who demanded, in return for empty shouts, peace and riches; and who expected that one man was to effect in a day what would be cheaply purchased by the struggle of a generation. All their dark and rude notion of a reformed state was to live unbutchered by the Barons and untaxed by their governors. Rome, I say, gave to her Senator not a free arm, nor a voluntary florin.[1] Well aware of the danger which surrounds the ruler who defends his state by foreign swords, the fondest wish and the most visionary dream of Rienzi was to revive amongst the Romans, in their first enthusiasm at his return, an organized and voluntary force, who in protecting him would protect themselves, — not, as before, in his first power, a *nominal* force of twenty thousand men who at any hour might yield (as they did yield) to one hundred and fifty, but a regular, well-disciplined, and trusty body, numerous enough to resist aggression, not numerous enough to become themselves the aggressors.

Hitherto all his private endeavors, his public exhortations, had failed; the crowd listened, shouted, saw him quit the city to meet their tyrants, and returned to their shops saying to each other, "What a great man!"

The character of Rienzi has chiefly received for its judges

[1] This plain fact is thoroughly borne out by every authority.

men of the closet, who speculate upon human beings as if they were machines; who gauge the great, not by their merit, but their success; and who have censured or sneered at the Tribune where they should have condemned the People! Had but one half the spirit been found in Rome which ran through a single vein of Cola di Rienzi, the august Republic, if not the majestic empire, of Rome, might be existing now! Turning from the people, the Senator saw his rude and savage troops, accustomed to the license of a tyrant's camp, and under commanders in whom it was ruin really to confide, whom it was equal ruin openly to distrust. Hemmed in on every side by dangers, his character daily grew more restless, vigilant, and stern; and still, with all the aims of the patriot, he felt all the curses of the tyrant. Without the rough and hardening career which, through a life of warfare, had brought Cromwell to a similar power, with more of grace and intellectual softness in his composition, he resembled that yet greater man in some points of character, — in his religious enthusiasm; his rigid justice, often forced by circumstance into severity, but never wantonly cruel or bloodthirsty; in his singular pride of country; and his mysterious command over the minds of others. But he resembled the giant Englishman far more in circumstance than original nature, and that circumstance assimilated their characters at the close of their several careers. Like Cromwell, beset by secret or open foes, the assassin's dagger ever gleamed before his eyes, and his stout heart, unawed by real, trembled at imagined, terrors. The countenance changing suddenly from red to white; the bloodshot, restless eye, belying the composed majesty of mien; the muttering lips, the broken slumber, the secret corselet, — these to both were the rewards of Power!

The elasticity of youth had left the Tribune. His frame, which had endured so many shocks, had contracted a painful disease in the dungeon at Avignon;[1] his high soul still supported him, but the nerves gave way. Tears came readily into his eyes, and often, like Cromwell, he was thought to weep

[1] Dicea che ne la prigione era stato ascarmato. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 18.

from hypocrisy, when in truth it was the hysteric of overwrought and irritable emotion. In all his former life singularly temperate,[1] he now fled from his goading thoughts to the beguiling excitement of wine. He drank deep, though its effects were never visible upon him except in a freer and wilder mood, and the indulgence of that racy humor, half mirthful, half bitter, for which his younger days had been distinguished. Now the mirth had more loudness, but the bitterness more gall.

Such were the characteristics of Rienzi at his return to power, made more apparent with every day. Nina he still loved with the same tenderness, and, if possible, she adored him more than ever; but the zest and freshness of triumphant ambition gone, somehow or other, their intercourse together had not its old charm. Formerly they talked constantly of the *future*, — of the bright days in store for them. Now, with a sharp and uneasy pang, Rienzi turned from all thought of that "gay to-morrow." There was no "gay to-morrow" for him! Dark and thorny as was the present hour, all beyond seemed yet less cheering and more ominous. Still he had some moments, brief but brilliant, when, forgetting the iron race amongst whom he was thrown, he plunged into scholastic reveries of the worshipped Past, and half fancied that he was of a People worthy of his genius and his devotion. Like most men who have been preserved through great dangers, he continued with increasing fondness to nourish a credulous belief in the grandeur of his own destiny. He could not imagine that he had been so delivered, and for no end! He was the Elected, and therefore the Instrument of Heaven. And thus that Bible, which in his loneliness, his wanderings, and his prison had been his solace and support, was more than ever needed in his greatness.

It was another cause of sorrow and chagrin to one who, amidst such circumstances of public danger, required so pecu-

[1] Solea prima esser sobrio, temperato, astinente, ora è diventato distemperatissimo bevitore, etc. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 18.

At first he used to be sober, temperate, abstinent; now he is become a most intemperate drinker, etc. — *Life of Cola di Rienzi.*

liarly the support and sympathy of private friends, that he found he had incurred amongst his old coadjutors the common penalty of absence. A few were dead; others, wearied with the storms of public life, and chilled in their ardor by the turbulent revolutions to which, in every effort for her amelioration, Rome has been subjected, had retired, — some altogether from the city, some from all participation in political affairs. In his halls, the Tribune-Senator was surrounded by unfamiliar faces and a new generation. Of the heads of the popular party, most were animated by a stern dislike to the Pontifical domination, and looked with suspicion and repugnance upon one who, if he governed for the people, had been trusted and honored by the Pope. Rienzi was not a man to forget former friends, however lowly, and had already found time to seek an interview with Cecco del Vecchio. But that stern republican had received him with coldness. His foreign mercenaries and his title of Senator were things that the artisan could not digest. With his usual bluntness, he had said so to Rienzi.

"As for the last," answered the Tribune, affably, "names do not alter natures. When I forget that to be delegate to the Pontiff is to be the guardian of his flock, forsake me. As for the first, let me but see five hundred Romans sworn to stand armed day and night for the defence of Rome, and I dismiss the Northmen."

Cecco del Vecchio was unsoftened. Honest, but uneducated, impracticable, and by nature a malcontent, he felt as if he were no longer necessary to the Senator; and this offended his pride. Strange as it may seem, the sullen artisan bore, too, a secret grudge against Rienzi for not having seen and selected him from a crowd of thousands on the day of his triumphal entry. Such are the small offences which produce deep danger to the great!

The artisans still held their meetings, and Cecco del Vecchio's voice was heard loud in grumbling forebodings. But what wounded Rienzi yet more than the alienation of the rest, was the confused and altered manner of his old friend and familiar, Pandulfo di Guido. Missing that popular citizen among those who daily offered their homage at the Capitol, he had sent for

him, and sought in vain to revive their ancient intimacy. Pandulfo affected great respect, but not all the condescension of the Senator could conquer his distance and his restraint. In fact, Pandulfo had learned to form ambitious projects of his own; and but for the return of Rienzi, Pandulfo di Guido felt that he might now, with greater safety, and indeed with some connivance from the Barons, have been the Tribune of the People. The facility to rise into popular eminence which a disordered and corrupt state, unblessed by a regular constitution, offers to ambition, breeds the jealousy and the rivalship which destroy union and rot away the ties of party.

Such was the situation of Rienzi; and yet, wonderful to say, he seemed to be adored by the multitude, and law and liberty, life and death, were in his hands!

Of all those who attended his person, Angelo Villani was the most favored; that youth, who had accompanied Rienzi in his long exile, had also, at the wish of Nina, attended him from Avignon, through his sojourn in the camp of Albornoz. His zeal, intelligence, and frank and evident affection blinded the Senator to the faults of his character, and established him more and more in the gratitude of Rienzi. He loved to feel that one faithful heart beat near him, and the page, raised to the rank of his chamberlain, always attended his person and slept in his ante-chamber.

Retiring that night, at Tivoli, to the apartment prepared for him, the Senator sat down by the open casement, through which were seen, waving in the starlight, the dark pines that crowned the hills, while the stillness of the hour gave to his ear the dash of the waterfalls heard above the regular and measured tread of the sentinels below. Leaning his cheek upon his hand, Rienzi long surrendered himself to gloomy thought, and when he looked up, he saw the bright blue eye of Villani fixed in anxious sympathy on his countenance.

"Is my lord unwell?" asked the young chamberlain, hesitating.

"Not so, my Angelo, but somewhat sick at heart. Methinks, for a September night, the air is chill! Angelo," resumed Rienzi, who had already acquired that uneasy curiosity which



belongs to an uncertain power, — "Angelo, bring me hither yon writing implements. Hast thou heard aught what the men say of our probable success against Palestrina?"

"Would my lord wish to learn all their gossip, whether it please or not?" answered Villani.

"If I studied only to hear what pleased me, Angelo, I should never have returned to Rome."

"Why, then, I heard a constable of the Northmen say, meaningly, that the place will not be carried."

"Humph! And what said the captains of my Roman legion?"

"My lord, I have heard it whispered that they fear defeat less than they do the revenge of the Barons if they are successful."

"And with such tools the living race of Europe and misjudging posterity will deem that the workman is to shape out the Ideal and the Perfect! Bring me yon Bible."

As Angelo reverently brought to Rienzi the sacred book, he said: "Just before I left my companions below, there was a rumor that the Lord Adrian Colonna had been imprisoned by his kinsman."

"I too heard, and I believe, as much," returned Rienzi; "these Barons would gibbet their own children in irons if there were any chance of the shackles growing rusty for want of prey. But the wicked shall be brought low, and their strong places shall be made desolate."

"I would, my lord," said Villani, "that our Northmen had other captains than these Provençals."

"Why?" asked Rienzi, abruptly.

"Have the creatures of the Captain of the Grand Company ever held faith with any man whom it suited the avarice or the ambition of Montreal to betray? Was he not, a few months ago, the right arm of John di Vico, and did he not sell his services to John di Vico's enemy, the Cardinal Albornoz? These warriors barter men as cattle."

"Thou describest Montreal rightly: a dangerous and an awful man. But methinks his brothers are of a duller and meaner kind; they dare not the crimes of the Robber Captain.

Howbeit, Angelo, thou hast touched a string that will make discord with sleep to-night. Fair youth, thy young eyes have need of slumber; withdraw, and when thou hearest men envy Rienzi, think that—"

"God never made Genius to be envied!" interrupted Villani, with an energy that overcame his respect. "We envy not the sun, but rather the valleys that ripen beneath his beams."

"Verily, if I be the sun," said Rienzi, with a bitter and melancholy smile, "I long for night,—and come it will, to the human as to the celestial pilgrim! Thank Heaven at least that our ambition cannot make us immortal!"

CHAPTER V.

THE BITER BIT.

The next morning, when Rienzi descended to the room where his captains awaited him, his quick eye perceived that a cloud still lowered upon the brow of Messere Brettone. Arimbaldo, sheltered by the recess of the rude casement shunned his eye.

"A fair morning, gentles," said Rienzi; "the sun laughs upon our enterprise. I have messengers from Rome betimes,—fresh troops will join us ere noon."

"I am glad, Senator," answered Brettone, "that you have tidings which will counteract the ill of those I have to narrate to thee. The soldiers murmur loudly: their pay is due to them; and I fear me that without money they will not march to Palestrina."

"As they will," returned Rienzi, carelessly. "It is but a few days since they entered Rome; pay did they receive in advance,—if they demand more, the Colonna and Orsini may outbid me. Draw off your soldiers, Sir Knight, and farewell."

Brettone's countenance fell; it was his object to get Rienzi more and more in his power, and he wished not to suffer him

to gain that strength which would accrue to him from the fall of Palestrina: the indifference of the Senator foiled and entrapped him in his own net.

"That must not be," said the brother of Montreal, after a confused silence; "we cannot leave you thus to your enemies. The soldiers, it is true, demand pay —"

"And should have it," said Rienzi. "I know these mercenaries, — it is ever with them, mutiny or money. I will throw myself on my Romans, and triumph, — or fall, if so Heaven decrees, with them. Acquaint your constables with my resolve."

Scarce were those words spoken ere, as previously concerted with Bretonne, the chief constable of the mercenaries appeared at the door. "Senator," said he, with a rough semblance of respect, "your orders to march have reached me; I have sought to marshal my men, but —"

"I know what thou wouldst say, friend," interrupted Rienzi, waving his hand. "Messere Brettone will give you my reply. Another time, Sir Captain, more ceremony with the Senator of Rome. You may withdraw."

The unforeseen dignity of Rienzi rebuked and abashed the constable; he looked at Brettone, who motioned him to depart. He closed the door and withdrew.

"What is to be done?" said Brettone.

"Sir Knight," replied Rienzi, gravely, "let us understand each other. Would you serve me, or not? If the first, you are not my equal, but subordinate — and you must obey, and not dictate; if the last, my debt to you shall be discharged, and the world is wide enough for both."

"We have declared allegiance to you," answered Brettone, "and it shall be given."

"One caution before I re-accept your fealty," replied Rienzi, very slowly. "For an open foe, I have my sword; for a traitor, mark me, Rome has the axe: of the first, I have no fear; for the last, no mercy."

"These are not words that should pass between friends," said Brettone, turning pale with suppressed emotion.

"Friends! Ye are my friends, then? — your hands!

Friends, so ye are, and shall prove it! Dear Arimbaldo, thou, like myself, art book-learned, — a clerkly soldier. Dost thou remember how in the Roman history it is told that the Treasury lacked money for the soldiers? The Consul convened the nobles. 'Ye,' said he, 'that have the offices and dignity should be the first to pay for them.' Ye heed me, my friends; the nobles took the hint, they found the money, — the army was paid. This example is not lost on you. I have made you the leaders of my force, Rome hath showered her honors on you. Your generosity shall commence the example which the Romans shall thus learn of strangers. Ye gaze at me, *my friends!* I read your noble souls, and thank ye beforehand. Ye have the dignity and the office; ye have also the wealth! — pay the hirelings, pay them!" [1]

Had a thunderbolt fallen at the feet of Brettone, he could not have been more astounded than at this simple suggestion of Rienzi's. He lifted his eyes to the Senator's face, and saw there that smile which he had already, bold as he was, learned to dread. He felt himself fairly sunk in the pit he had digged for another. There was that in the Senator-Tribune's brow that told him to refuse was to declare open war; and the moment was not ripe for that.

"Ye accede," said Rienzi; "ye have done well."

The Senator clapped his hands; his guard appeared.

"Summon the head constables of the soldiery."

The brothers still remained dumb.

The constables entered.

"My friends," said Rienzi, "Messere Brettone and Messere Arimbaldo have my directions to divide amongst your force a thousand florins. This evening we encamp beneath Palestrina."

The constables withdrew in visible surprise. Rienzi gazed a moment on the brothers, chuckling within himself, for his sarcastic humor enjoyed his triumph. "You lament not your devotion, *my friends?*"

"No," said Brettone, rousing himself; "the sum but trivially swells our debt."

"Frankly said; your hands once more! The good people

[1] See the Anonymous Biographer, lib. ii. cap. 19.

of Tivoli expect me in the Piazza; they require some admonitions. Adieu till noon."

When the door closed on Rienzi, Brettone struck the handle of his sword fiercely. "The Roman laughs at us," said he. "But let Walter de Montreal once appear in Rome, and the proud jester shall pay us dearly for this."

"Hush!" said Arimbaldo; "walls have ears, and that imp of Satan, young Villani, seems to me ever at our heels!"

"A thousand florins! I trust his heart hath as many drops," growled the chafed Brettone, unheeding his brother.

The soldiers were paid, the army marched; the eloquence of the Senator had augmented his force by volunteers from Tivoli, and wild and half-armed peasantry joined his standard from the Campagna and the neighboring mountains.

Palestrina was besieged; Rienzi continued dexterously to watch the brothers of Montreal. Under pretext of imparting to the Italian volunteers the advantage of their military science, he separated them from their mercenaries, and assigned to them the command of the less disciplined Italians, with whom, he believed, they could not venture to tamper. He himself assumed the lead of the Northmen; and, despite themselves, they were fascinated by his artful, yet dignified affability, and the personal courage he displayed in some sallies of the besieged Barons. But as the huntsmen upon all the subtlest windings of their prey, so pressed the relentless and speeding Fates upon Cola di Rienzi.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EVENTS GATHER TO THE END.

WHILE this the state of the camp of the besiegers, Luca di Savelli and Stefanello Colonna were closeted with a stranger who had privately entered Palestrina on the night before the Romans pitched their tents beneath its walls. This visitor, who

might have somewhat passed his fortieth year, yet retained, scarcely diminished, the uncommon beauty of form and countenance for which his youth had been remarkable. But it was no longer that character of beauty which has been described in his first introduction to the reader; it was no longer the almost woman delicacy of feature and complexion, or the high-born polish and graceful suavity of manner which distinguished Walter de Montreal: a life of vicissitude and war had at length done its work. His bearing was now abrupt and imperious, as that of one accustomed to rule wild spirits, and he had exchanged the grace of persuasion for the sternness of command. His athletic form had grown more spare and sinewy, and instead of the brow half shaded by fair and clustering curls, his forehead, though yet but slightly wrinkled, was completely bald at the temples, and by its unwonted height, increased the dignity and manliness of his aspect. The bloom of his complexion was faded, less by outward exposure than inward thought, into a bronzed and settled paleness; and his features seemed more marked and prominent, as the flesh had somewhat sunk from the contour of the cheek. Yet the change suited the change of age and circumstance; and if the Provençal now less realized the idea of the brave and fair knight-errant, he but looked the more what the knight-errant had become, — the sagacious counsellor and the mighty leader.

"You must be aware," said Montreal, continuing a discourse which appeared to have made great impression on his companions, "that in this contest between yourselves and the Senator I alone hold the balance. Rienzi is utterly in my power: my brothers the leaders of his army; myself his creditor. It rests with me to secure him on the throne or to send him to the scaffold. I have but to give the order, and the Grand Company enter Rome; but without their agency methinks if you keep faith with me, our purpose can be effected."

"In the meanwhile, Palestrina is besieged by your brothers!" said Stefanello, sharply.

"But they have my orders to waste their time before its walls. Do you not see that by this very siege, fruitless as, if

I will, it shall be, Rienzi loses fame abroad and popularity in Rome?"

"Sir Knight," said Luca di Savelli, "you speak as a man versed in the profound policy of the times; and under all the circumstances which menace us, your proposal seems but fitting and reasonable. On the one hand, you undertake to restore us and the other Barons to Rome, and to give Rienzi to the Staircase of the Lion—"

"Not so, not so," replied Montreal, quickly; "I will consent either so to subdue and cripple his power as to render him a puppet in our hands, a mere shadow of authority; or, if his proud spirit chafe at its cage, to give it once more liberty amongst the wilds of Germany. I would fetter or banish him, but not destroy, unless," added Montreal, after a moment's pause, "fate absolutely drives us to it. Power should not demand victims; but to secure it, victims may be necessary."

"I understand your refinements," said Luca di Savelli, with his icy smile, "and am satisfied. The Barons once restored, our palaces once more manned, and I am willing to take the chance of the Senator's longevity. This service you promise to effect?"

"I do."

"And, in return, you demand our assent to your enjoying the rank of Podesta for five years?"

"You say right."

"I, for one, accede to the terms," said the Savelli; "there is my hand. I am wearied of these brawls, even amongst ourselves, and think that a foreign ruler may best enforce order; the more especially if, like you, Sir Knight, one whose birth and renown are such as to make him comprehend the difference between Barons and Plebeians."

"For my part," said Stefanello, "I feel that we have but a choice of evils: I like not a foreign Podesta, but I like a plebeian Senator still less. There too is my hand, Sir Knight."

"Noble Signors," said Montreal, after a short pause, and turning his piercing gaze from one to the other with great deliberation, "our compact is sealed: one word by way of

codicil. Walter de Montreal is no Count Pepin of Minorbino! Once before, — little dreaming, I own, that the victory would be so facile, — I intrusted your cause and mine to a deputy; your cause he promoted, mine he lost. He drove out the Tribune, and then suffered the Barons to banish himself. This time I see to my own affairs. And, mark you, I have learned in the Grand Company one lesson; namely, never to pardon spy or deserter, of whatever rank. Your forgiveness for the hint. Let us change the theme. So ye detain in your fortress my old friend the Baron di Castello?"

"Ay," said Luca di Savelli, for Stefanello, stung by Montreal's threat, which he dared not openly resent, preserved a sullen silence; "ay, he is one noble the less to the Senator's council."

"You act wisely. I know his views and temper, — at present dangerous to our interests. Yet use him well, I entreat you; he may hereafter serve us. And now, my lords, my eyes are weary; suffer me to retire. Pleasant dreams of the New Revolution to us all!"

"By your leave, noble Montreal, we will attend you to your couch," said Luca di Savelli.

"By my troth, and ye shall not. I am no Tribune to have great signors for my pages, but a plain gentleman and a hardy soldier; your attendants will conduct me to whatever chamber your hospitality assigns to one who could sleep soundly beneath the rudest hedge under your open skies."

Savelli, however, insisted on conducting the Podesta that was to be to his apartment. He then returned to Stefanello, whom he found pacing the saloon with long and disordered strides.

"What have we done, Savelli?" said he quickly, — "sold our city to a barbarian!"

"Sold!" said Savelli; "to my mind it is the other part of the contract in which we have played our share. We have bought, Colonna, not sold, — bought our lives from yon army; bought our power, our fortunes, our castles, from the Demagogue Senator; bought what is better than all, — triumph and revenge. Tush, Colonna! see you not that if we had balked this

great warrior we had perished? Leagued with the Senator, the Grand Company would have marched to Rome; and whether Montreal assisted or murdered Rienzi, — for methinks he is a Romulus who would brook no Remus, — *we* had equally been undone. *Now*, we have made our own terms, and our shares are equal. Nay, the first steps to be taken are in our favor. Rienzi is to be snared, and *we* are to enter Rome."

"And then the Provençal is to be Despot of the city."

"Podesta, if you please. Podestas who offend the people are often banished, and sometimes stoned; Podestas who insult the nobles are often stilettoed, and sometimes poisoned," said Savelli. "'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' Meanwhile, say nothing to the bear Orsini. Such men mar all wisdom. Come, cheer thee, Stefanello."

"Luca di Savelli, you have not such a stake in Rome as I have," said the young lord, haughtily; "no Podesta can take from *you* the rank of the first Signor of the Italian metropolis!"

"An you had said so to the Orsini there would have been drawing of swords," said Savelli. "But cheer thee, I say; is not our first care to destroy Rienzi? And then, between the death of one foe and the rise of another, are there not such preventives as Ezzelino de Romano has taught to wary men? Cheer thee, I say; and, next year, if we but hold together, Stefanello Colonna and Luca di Savelli will be joint Senators of Rome, and these great men food for worms!"

While thus conferred the Barons, Montreal, ere he retired to rest, stood gazing from the open lattice of his chamber over the landscape below, which slept in the autumnal moonlight, while at a distance gleamed, pale and steady, the lights round the encampment of the besiegers.

"Wide plains and broad valleys," thought the warrior, "soon shall ye repose in peace beneath a new sway, against which no petty tyrant shall dare rebel. And ye, white walls of canvas, even while I gaze, *ye* admonish me how realms are won. Even as, of old, from the Nomad tents was built up the stately Babylon[1] that 'was not till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness,' so by the new Ishmae-

[1] Isaiah xxii.

lites of Europe shall a race, undreamed of now, be founded, and the camp of yesterday be the city of to-morrow. Verily, when, for one soft offence, the Pontiff thrust me from the bosom of the Church, little guessed he what enemy he raised to Rome! How solemn is the night; how still the heavens and earth! The very stars are as hushed as if intent on the events that are to pass below! So solemn and so still feels mine own spirit, and an awe unknown till now warns me that I approach the crisis of my daring fate!"

BOOK X.

THE LION OF BASALT.

ORA voglio contare la morte del Tribuno. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 24.

Now will I narrate the death of the Tribune. — *Life of Cola di Rienzi.*

CHAPTER I.

THE CONJUNCTION OF HOSTILE PLANETS IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

ON the fourth day of the siege, and after beating back to those almost impregnable walls the soldiery of the Barons, headed by the Prince of the Orsini, the Senator returned to his tent, where despatches from Rome awaited him. He ran his eye hastily over them, till he came to the last; yet each contained news that might have longer delayed the eye of a man less inured to danger. From one he learned that Albornoz, whose blessing had confirmed to him the rank of Senator, had received with special favor the messengers of the Orsini and Colonna. He knew that the Cardinal, whose views connected him with the Roman Patricians, desired his downfall; but he feared not Albornoz, — perhaps in his secret heart he wished that any open aggression from the Pontiff's Legate might throw him wholly on the people.

He learned further that, short as had been his absence, Pandulfo di Guido had twice addressed the populace, not in favor of the Senator, but in artful regrets of the loss to the trade of Rome in the absence of her wealthiest nobles.

"For this, then, he has deserted me," said Rienzi to himself. "Let him beware!"

The tidings contained in the next touched him home: Walter de Montreal had openly arrived in Rome. The grasping and lawless bandit, whose rapine filled with a robber's booty every bank in Europe; whose Company was the army of a King, whose ambition, vast, unprincipled, and profound, he so well knew; whose brothers were in his camp, their treason already more than suspected, — Walter de Montreal was in Rome!

The Senator remained perfectly aghast at this new peril; and then said, setting his teeth as in a vice, —

"Wild tiger, thou art in the Lion's den!" Then pausing, he broke out again, "One false step, Walter de Montreal, and all the mailed hands of the Grand Company shall not pluck thee from the abyss! But what can I do? Return to Rome, the plans of Montreal unpenetrated, no accusation against him! On what pretence can I with honor raise the siege? To leave Palestrina is to give a triumph to the Barons, to abandon Adrian, to degrade my cause. Yet, while away from Rome, every hour breeds treason and danger. Pandulfo, Albornoz, Montreal, — all are at work against me. A keen and trusty spy, now. — Ha! well thought of, — Villani. What, ho, Angelo Villani!"

The young chamberlain appeared.

"I think," said Rienzi, "to have often heard that thou art an orphan?"

"True, my lord; the old Augustine nun who reared my boyhood has told me again and again that my parents are dead. Both noble, my lord; but I am the child of shame. And I say it often, and think of it ever, in order to make Angelo Villani remember that he has a name to win."

"Young man, serve me as you have served, and if I live you shall have no need to call yourself an orphan. Mark me! I want a friend, — the Senator of Rome wants a friend; only one friend, gentle Heaven, only one!"

Angelo sank on his knee and kissed the mantle of his lord.

"Say a follower. I am too mean to be Rienzi's friend."

"Too mean? Go to! There is nothing mean before God, unless it be a base soul under high titles. With me, boy,

there is but one nobility, and Nature signs its charter. Listen: thou hearest daily of Walter de Montreal, brother to these Provençals, — great captain of great robbers?"

"Ay, and I have seen him, my lord!"

"Well, then, he is in Rome. Some daring thought, some well-supported and deep-schemed villany, could alone make that bandit venture openly into an Italian city whose territories he ravaged by fire and sword a few months back. But his brothers have lent me money, assisted my return, — for their own ends, it is true; but the seeming obligation gives them real power. These Northern swordsmen would cut my throat if the Great Captain bade them. He counts on my supposed weakness. I know him of old. I suspect — nay, I read — his projects, but I cannot prove them. Without proof, I cannot desert Palestrina in order to accuse and seize him. Thou art shrewd, thoughtful, acute: couldst thou go to Rome, watch day and night his movements, see if he receive messengers from Albornoz or the Barons, if he confer with Pandulfo di Guido, — watch his lodgment, I say, night and day? He affects no concealment; your task will be less difficult than it seems. Apprise the Signora of all you learn. Give me your news daily. Will you undertake this mission?"

"I will, my lord."

"To horse, then, quick! And mind, — save the wife of my bosom, I have no confidant in Rome."

CHAPTER II.

MONTREAL AT ROME. — HIS RECEPTION OF ANGELO VILLANI.

THE danger that threatened Rienzi by the arrival of Montreal was indeed formidable. The Knight of St. John, having marched his army into Lombardy, had placed it at the disposal of the Venetian State in its war with the Archbishop of Milan. For this service he received an immense sum, while he provided winter quarters for his troop, for whom he proposed

ample work in the ensuing spring. Leaving Palestrina secretly and in disguise, with but a slender train, which met him at Tivoli, Montreal repaired to Rome. His ostensible object was partly to congratulate the Senator on his return, partly to receive the moneys lent to Rienzi by his brother.

His secret object we have partly seen; but not contented with the support of the Barons, he trusted, by the corrupting means of his enormous wealth, to form a third party in support of his own ulterior designs. Wealth, indeed, in that age and in that land was scarcely less the purchaser of diadems than it had been in the later days of the Roman Empire. And in many a city, torn by hereditary feuds, the hatred of faction rose to that extent that a foreign tyrant, willing and able to expel one party, might obtain at least the temporary submission of the other. His after-success was greatly in proportion to his power to maintain his state by a force which was independent of the citizens, and by a treasury which did not require the odious recruit of taxes. But more avaricious than ambitious, more cruel than firm, it was by griping exaction or unnecessary bloodshed that such usurpers usually fell.

Montreal, who had scanned the frequent revolutions of the time with a calm and investigating eye, trusted that he should be enabled to avoid both these errors; and, as the reader has already seen, he had formed the profound and sagacious project of consolidating his usurpation by an utterly new race of nobles, who, serving him by the feudal tenure of the North, and ever ready to protect him, because in so doing they protected their own interests, should assist to erect, not the rotten and unsupported fabric of a single tyranny, but the strong fortress of a new, hardy, and compact Aristocratic State. Thus had the great dynasties of the North been founded, in which a King, though seemingly curbed by the Barons, was in reality supported by a common interest, whether against a subdued population or a foreign invasion.

Such were the vast schemes — extending into yet wider fields of glory and conquest, bounded only by the Alps — with which the Captain of the Grand Company beheld the columns and arches of the Seven-hilled city.



No fear disturbed the long current of his thoughts. His brothers were the leaders of Rienzi's hireling army; that army were his creatures. Over Rienzi himself he assumed the right of a creditor. Thus against one party he deemed himself secure. For the friends of the Pope, he had supported himself with private, though cautious, letters from Albornoz, who desired only to make use of him for the return of the Roman Barons; and with the heads of the latter we have already witnessed his negotiations. Thus was he fitted, as he thought, to examine, to tamper with all parties, and to select from each the materials necessary for his own objects.

The open appearance of Montreal excited in Rome no inconsiderable sensation. The friends of the Barons gave out that Rienzi was in league with the Grand Company, and that he was to sell the Imperial City to the plunder and pillage of Barbarian robbers. The effrontery with which Montreal (against whom, more than once, the Pontiff had thundered his bulls) appeared in the Metropolitan City of the Church was made yet more insolent by the recollection of that stern justice which had led the Tribune to declare open war against all the robbers of Italy; and this audacity was linked with the obvious reflection that the brothers of the bold Provençal were the instruments of Rienzi's return. So quickly spread suspicion through the city that Montreal's presence alone would in a few weeks have sufficed to ruin the Senator. Meanwhile, the natural boldness of Montreal silenced every whisper of prudence; and, blinded by the dazzle of his hopes, the Knight of St. John, as if to give double importance to his coming, took up his residence in a sumptuous palace, and his retinue rivalled, in the splendor of garb and pomp, the display of Rienzi himself in his earlier and more brilliant power.

Amidst the growing excitement, Angelo Villani arrived at Rome. The character of this young man had been formed by his peculiar circumstances. He possessed qualities which often mark the illegitimate as with a common stamp. He was insolent, like most of those who hold a doubtful rank; and while ashamed of his bastardy, was arrogant of the supposed nobility of his unknown parentage. The universal ferment and agitation

of Italy at that day rendered ambition the most common of all the passions; and thus ambition, in all its many shades and varieties, forces itself into our delineations of character in this history. Though not for Angelo Villani were the dreams of the more lofty and generous order of that sublime infirmity, he was strongly incited by the desire and resolve to *rise*. He had warm affections and grateful impulses, and his fidelity to his patron had been carried to a virtue; but from his irregulated and desultory education, and the reckless profligacy of those with whom, in ante-chambers and guard-rooms, much of his youth had been passed, he had neither high principles nor an enlightened honor. Like most Italians, cunning and shrewd, he scrupled not at any deceit that served a purpose or a friend. His strong attachment to Rienzi had been unconsciously increased by the gratification of pride and vanity, flattered by the favor of so celebrated a man. Both self-interest and attachment urged him to every effort to promote the views and safety of one at once his benefactor and patron; and on undertaking his present mission, his only thought was to fulfil it with the most complete success. Far more brave and daring than was common with the Italians, something of the hardihood of an Ultramontane race gave nerve and vigor to his craft; and from what his art suggested, his courage never shrank.

When Rienzi had first detailed to him the objects of his present task, he instantly called to mind his adventure with the tall soldier in the crowd at Avignon. "If ever thou wantest a friend, seek him in Walter de Montreal," were words that had often rung in his ear, and they now recurred to him with prophetic distinctness. He had no doubt that it was Montreal himself whom he had seen. Why the Great Captain should have taken this interest in him, Angelo little cared to conjecture.

Most probably it was but a crafty pretence, — one of the common means by which the Chief of the Grand Company attracted to himself the youths of Italy as well as the warriors of the North. He only thought now how he could turn the Knight's promise to account. What more easy than to present himself to

Montreal, remind him of the words, enter his service, and thus effectually watch his conduct? The office of spy was not that which would have pleased every mind, but it shocked not the fastidiousness of Angelo Villani; and the fearful hatred with which his patron had often spoken of the avaricious and barbarian robber, — the scourge of his native land, — had infected the young man, who had much of the arrogant and mock patriotism of the Romans, with a similar sentiment. More vindictive even than grateful, he bore, too, a secret grudge against Montreal's brothers, whose rough address had often wounded his pride; and, above all, his early recollections of the fear and execration in which Ursula seemed ever to hold the terrible Fra Moreale, impressed him with a vague belief of some ancient wrong to himself or his race perpetrated by the Provençal, which he was not ill-pleased to have the occasion to avenge. In truth, the words of Ursula, mystic and dark as they were in their denunciation had left upon Villani's boyish impressions an unaccountable feeling of antipathy and hatred to the man it was now his object to betray. For the rest, every device seemed to him decorous and justifiable, so that it saved his master, served his country, and advanced himself.

Montreal was alone in his chamber when it was announced to him that a young Italian craved an audience. Professionally open to access, he forthwith gave admission to the applicant.

The Knight of St. John instantly recognized the page he had encountered at Avignon; and when Angelo Villani said, with easy boldness, "I have come to remind Sir Walter de Montreal of a promise —" the Knight interrupted him with cordial frankness: "Thou needest not, I remember it. Dost thou now require my friendship?"

"I do, noble Signor!" answered Angelo; "I know not where else to seek a patron."

"Canst thou read and write? I fear me not."

"I have been taught those arts," replied Villani.

"It is well. Is thy birth gentle?"

"It is."

"Better still. Thy name?"

"Angelo Villani."

"I take thy blue eyes and low broad brow," said Montreal, with a slight sigh, "in pledge of thy truth. Henceforth, Angelo Villani, thou art in the list of my secretaries. Another time thou shalt tell me more of thyself. Thy service dates from this day. For the rest, no man ever wanted wealth who served Walter de Montreal, nor advancement, if he served him faithfully. My closet, through yonder door, is thy waiting room. Ask for and send hither Lusignan of Lyons; he is my chief scribe, and will see to thy comforts and instruct thee in thy business."

Angelo withdrew; Montreal's eye followed him.

"A strange likeness!" said he, musingly and sadly; "my heart leaps to that boy!"

CHAPTER III.

MONTREAL'S BANQUET.

Some few days after the date of the last chapter, Rienzi received news from Rome which seemed to produce in him a joyous and elated excitement. His troops still lay before Palestrina, and still the banners of the Barons waved over its unconquered walls. In truth, the Italians employed half their time in brawls amongst themselves; the Velletritrani had feuds with the people of Tivoli, and the Romans were still afraid of conquering the Barons. "The hornet," said they, "stings worse after he is dead; and neither an Orsini, a Savelli, nor a Colonna was ever known to forgive."

Again and again had the captains of his army assured the indignant Senator that the fortress was impregnable, and that time and money were idly wasted upon the siege. Rienzi knew better, but he concealed his thoughts.

He now summoned to his tent the brothers of Provence, and announced to them his intention of returning instantly to Rome. "The mercenaries shall continue the siege under our lieutenant,

and you, with my Roman Legion, shall accompany me. Your brother, Sir Walter, and I, both want your presence; we have affairs to arrange between us. After a few days I shall raise recruits in the city and return."

This was what the brothers desired; they approved, with evident joy, the Senator's proposition.

Rienzi next sent for the lieutenant of his body-guard, the same Riccardo Annibaldi whom the reader will remember in the earlier part of this work as the antagonist of Montreal's lance. This young man — one of the few nobles who espoused the cause of the Senator — had evinced great courage and military ability, and promised fair (should Fate spare his life) [1] to become one of the best captains of his time.

"Dear Annibaldi," said Rienzi, "at length I can fulfil the project on which we have privately conferred. I take with me to Rome the two Provençal captains, I leave you chief of the army. Palestrina will yield now — eh! — ha, ha, ha! — Palestrina will yield now!"

"By my right hand, I think so, Senator," replied Annibaldi. "These foreigners have hitherto only stirred up quarrels amongst ourselves, and if not cowards are certainly traitors!"

"Hush, hush, hush! Traitors! The learned Arimbaldo, the brave Brettone, traitors! Fie on it! No, no; they are very excellent, honorable men, but not lucky in the camp; not lucky in the camp. Better speed to them in the city! And now to business."

The Senator then detailed to Annibaldi the plan he himself had formed for taking the town, and the military skill of Annibaldi at once recognized its feasibility.

With his Roman troop and Montreal's brothers, one at either hand, Rienzi then departed to Rome.

That night Montreal gave a banquet to Pandulfo di Guido and to certain of the principal citizens, whom one by one he had already sounded, and found hollow at heart to the cause of the Senator.

[1] It appears that this was the same Annibaldi who was afterwards slain in an affray; Petrarch lauds his valor and laments his fate.

Pandulfo sat at the right hand of the Knight of St. John, and Montreal lavished upon him the most courteous attentions.

"Pledge me in this, — it is from the Vale of Chiana, near Monte Pulciano," said Montreal. "I think I have heard book-men say (you know, Signor Pandulfo, we ought all to be book-men now!) that the site was renowned of old. In truth, the wine hath a racy flavor."

"I hear," said Bruttini, one of the lesser Barons (a stanch friend to the Colonna), "that in this respect the innkeeper's son has put his book-learning to some use: he knows every place where the wine grows richest."

"What, the Senator is turned wine-bibber!" said Montreal, quaffing a vast gobletful; "that must unfit him for business, — 't is a pity."

"Verily, yes," said Pandulfo; "a man at the head of a state should be temperate, — *I* never drink wine unmixed."

"Ah!" whispered Montreal, "if your calm good-sense ruled Rome, then, indeed, the metropolis of Italy might taste of peace. Signor Vivaldi," and the host turned towards a wealthy draper, "these disturbances are bad for trade."

"Very, very!" groaned the draper.

"The Barons are your best customers," quoth the minor noble.

"Much, much!" said the draper.

"'T is a pity that they are thus roughly expelled," said Montreal, in a melancholy tone. "Would it not be possible, if the Senator (*I* drink his health) were less rash, — less zealous, rather, — to unite free institutions with the return of the Barons? *Such* should be the task of a truly wise statesman."

"It surely might be possible," returned Vivaldi; "the Savelli alone spend more with me than all the rest of Rome."

"I know not if it be possible," said Bruttini, "but I do know that it is an outrage to all decorum that an innkeeper's son should be enabled to make a solitude of the palaces of Rome."

"It certainly seems to indicate too vulgar a desire of mob favor," said Montreal. "However, I trust we shall harmo-

nize all these differences. Rienzi perhaps — nay, doubtless — *means* well!"

"I would," said Vivaldi, who had received his cue, "that we might form a mixed constitution, — Plebeians and Patricians, each in their separate order."

"But," said Montreal, gravely, "so new an experiment would demand great physical force."

"Why, true; but we might call in an umpire, — a foreigner who had no interest in either faction — who might protect the new Buono Stato, — a Podesta, as we have done before; Brancaleone, for instance. How well and wisely he ruled, — that was a golden age for Rome! A Podesta forever, — that's my theory!"

"You need not seek far for the president of your council," said Montreal, smiling at Pandulfo; "a citizen at once popular, well-born, and wealthy may be found at my right hand."

Pandulfo hemmed and colored.

Montreal proceeded. "A committee of trades might furnish an honorable employment to Signor Vivaldi; and the treatment of all foreign affairs, the employment of armies, etc., might be left to the Barons, — with a more open competition, Signor di Bruttini, to the Barons of the second order than has hitherto been conceded to their birth and importance. Sirs, will you taste the Malvoisie?"

"Still," said Vivaldi, after a pause (Vivaldi anticipated at least the supplying with cloth the whole of the Grand Company), "still, such a moderate and well-digested constitution would never be acceded to by Rienzi."

"Why should it? What need of Rienzi?" exclaimed Bruttini. "Rienzi may take another trip to Bohemia."

"Gently, gently," said Montreal; "I do not despair. All open violence against the Senator would strengthen his power. No, no; humble him, admit the Barons, and then insist on your own terms. Between the two factions you might then establish a fitting balance. And in order to keep your new constitution from the encroachment of either extreme, there *are* warriors, and knights too, who for a certain rank in the great city of Rome would maintain horse and foot at its ser-

vice. We Ultramontanes are often harshly judged; we are wanderers and Ishmaelites solely because we have no honorable place of rest. Now, if *I* —"

"Ay, if you, noble Montreal!" said Vivaldi.

The company remained hushed in breathless attention when suddenly there was heard — deep, solemn, muffled — the great bell of the Capitol!

"Hark!" said Vivaldi, "the bell; it tolls for execution, — an unwonted hour!"

"Sure, the Senator has not returned!" exclaimed Pandulfo di Guido, turning pale.

"No, no," quoth Bruttini, "it is but a robber caught two nights ago in Romagna. I heard that he was to die to-night."

At the word "robber" Montreal changed countenance slightly. The wine circulated, the bell continued to toll; its suddenness over, it ceased to alarm. Conversation flowed again.

"What were you saying, Sir Knight?" said Vivaldi.

"Why, let me think on't — Oh! speaking of the necessity of supporting a new state by force, I said that if *I* —"

"Ah, that was it!" quoth Bruttini, thumping the table.

"If *I* were summoned to your aid, — *summoned*, mind ye, and absolved by the Pope's Legate of my former sins (they weigh heavily on me, gentles), I would myself guard your city from foreign foe and civil disturbance, with my gallant swordsmen. Not a Roman citizen should contribute a 'danaro' to the cost."

"*Viva Fra Moreale!*" cried Bruttini; and the shout was echoed by all the boon companions.

"Enough for me," continued Montreal, "to expiate my offences. Ye know, gentlemen, my order is vowed to God and the Church; a warrior monk am I! Enough for me to expiate my offences, I say, in the defence of the Holy City. Yet I, too, have my private and more earthly views, — who is above them? I — The bell changes its note!"

"It is but the change that preludes execution, — the poor robber is about to die!"

Montreal crossed himself, and resumed: "I am a knight

and a noble," said he, proudly; "the profession I have followed is that of arms: but — I will not disguise it — mine equals have regarded me as one who has stained his scutcheon by too reckless a pursuit of glory and of gain. I wish to reconcile myself with my order, to purchase a new name, to vindicate myself to the Grand Master and the Pontiff. I have had hints, gentles, — hints that I might best promote my interest by restoring order to the Papal metropolis. The Legate Albornoz (here is his letter) recommends me to keep watch upon the Senator."

"Surely," interrupted Pandulfo, "I hear steps below."

"The mob going to the robber's execution," said Bruttini; "proceed, Sir Knight!"

"And," continued Montreal, surveying his audience before he proceeded further, "what think ye — I do but ask your opinion, wiser than mine — what think ye, as a fitting precaution against too arbitrary a power in the Senator — what think ye of the return of the Colonna and the bold Barons of Palestrina?"

"Here 's to their health!" cried Vivaldi, rising.

As by a sudden impulse, the company rose. "To the health of the besieged Barons!" was shouted aloud.

"Next, what if — I do but humbly suggest — what if you gave the Senator a colleague? It is no affront to him. It was but as yesterday that one of the Colonna, who was Senator, received a colleague in Bertoldo Orsini."

"A most wise precaution," cried Vivaldi. "And where a colleague like Pandulfo di Guido?"

"*Viva Pandulfo di Guido!*" cried the guests; and again their goblets were drained to the bottom.

"And if in this I can assist ye by fair words with the Senator (ye know he owes me moneys, — my brothers have served him) command Walter de Montreal."

"And if fair words fail?" said Vivaldi.

"The Grand Company — heed me, *ye* are the councillors — the Grand Company is accustomed to forced marches!"

"*Viva Fra Moreale!*" cried Bruttini and Vivaldi, simultaneously. "A health to all, my friends;" continued Bruttini: "a

health to the Barons, Rome's old friends; to Pandulfo di Guido, the Senator's new colleague; and to Fra Moreale, Rome's new Podesta!"

"The bell has ceased," said Vivaldi, putting down his goblet.

"Heaven have mercy on the robber!" added Bruttini.

Scarce had he spoken, ere three taps were heard at the door; the guests looked at each other in dumb amaze.

"New guests!" said Montreal. "I asked some trusty friends to join us this evening. By my faith, they are welcome! Enter!"

The door opened slowly; three by three entered, in complete armor, the guards of the Senator. On they marched, regular and speechless. They surrounded the festive board, they filled the spacious hall, and the lights of the banquet were reflected upon their corselets as on a wall of steel.

Not a syllable was uttered by the feasters; they were as if turned to a stone. Presently the guards gave way, and Rienzi himself appeared. He approached the table, and folding his arms, turned his gaze deliberately from guest to guest, till at last his eyes rested on Montreal, who had also risen, and who alone of the party had recovered the amaze of the moment.

And there, as these two men, each so celebrated, so proud, able, and ambitious, stood front to front, it was literally as if the rival Spirits of Force and Intellect, Order and Strife, of the Falchion and the Fasces, — the Antagonist Principles by which empires are ruled and empires overthrown, — had met together, incarnate and opposed. They stood, both silent, as if fascinated by each other's gaze, loftier in stature and nobler in presence than all around.

Montreal spoke first, and with a forced smile.

"Senator of Rome, dare I believe that my poor banquet tempts thee, and may I trust that these armed men are a graceful compliment to one to whom arms have been a pastime?"

Rienzi answered not, but waved his hand to his guards.

Montreal was seized on the instant. Again he surveyed the guests: as a bird from the rattlesnake, shrank Pandulfo di Guido, trembling, motionless, aghast, from the glittering eye of the Senator. Slowly Rienzi raised his fatal hand towards



the unhappy citizen; Pandulfo saw, felt his doom — shrieked — and fell senseless in the arms of the soldiers.

One other and rapid glance cast the Senator round the board, and then, with a disdainful smile, as if anxious for no meaner prey, turned away. Not a breath had hitherto passed his lips, all had been dumb show, and his grim silence had imparted a more freezing terror to his unguessed-for apparition. Only, when he reached the door, he turned back, gazed upon the Knight of St. John's bold and undaunted face, and said, almost in a whisper, "Walter de Montreal, you heard the death-knell!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE SENTENCE OF WALTER DE MONTREAL.

In silence the Captain of the Grand Company was borne to the prison of the Capitol. In the same building lodged the rivals for the government of Rome: the one occupied the prison, the other the palace. The guards forbore the ceremony of fetters, and leaving a lamp on the table, Montreal perceived he was not alone, — his brothers had preceded him.

"We are happily met," said the Knight of St. John; "we have passed together pleasanter nights than this is likely to be."

"Can you jest, Walter?" said Arimbaldo, half-weeping. "Know you not that our doom is fixed? Death scowls upon us."

"Death!" repeated Montreal, and for the first time his countenance changed; perhaps for the first time in his life he felt the thrill and agony of fear.

"Death!" he repeated again. "Impossible! He dare not, Brettone; the soldiers, the Northmen, — they will mutiny, they will pluck us back from the grasp of the headsman!"

"Cast from you so vain a hope," said Brettone, sullenly; "the soldiers are encamped at Palestrina."

"How! Dolt — fool! Came you then to Rome *alone!* Are we *alone* with this dread man?"

"*You* are the dolt! Why came you hither?" answered the brother.

"Why, indeed, but that I knew thou wast the captain of the army; and — But thou saidst right, — the folly is mine to have played against the crafty Tribune so unequal a brain as thine. Enough! Reproaches are idle. When were ye arrested?"

"At dusk, — the instant we entered the gates of Rome. Rienzi entered privately."

"Humph! What can he know against me? Who can have betrayed me? My secretaries are tried, all trustworthy, except that youth, and he so seemingly zealous, — that Angelo Villani!"

"Villani! Angelo Villani!" cried the brothers in a breath. "Hast thou confided aught to him?"

"Why, I fear he must have seen, at least in part, my correspondence with you and with the Barons, — he was among my scribes. Know you aught of him?"

"Walter, Heaven hath demented you!" returned Brettone. "Angelo Villani is the favorite menial of the Senator."

"Those eyes deceived me then," muttered Montreal, solemnly and shuddering; "and, as if *her* ghost had returned to earth, God smites me from the grave!"

There was a long silence. At length Montreal, whose bold and sanguine temper was never long clouded, spoke again.

"Are the Senator's coffers full? But that is impossible."

"Bare as a Dominican's."

"We are saved, then. He shall name his price for our heads. Money must be more useful to him than blood."

And as if with that thought all furthur meditation were rendered unnecessary, Montreal doffed his mantle, uttered a short prayer, and flung himself on a pallet in a corner of the cell.

"I have slept on worse beds," said the Knight, stretching himself; and in a few minutes he was fast asleep.

The brothers listened to his deep-drawn, but regular breath-

ing, with envy and wonder, but they were in no mood to converse. Still and speechless, they sat like statues beside the sleeper. Time passed on, and the first cold air of the hour that succeeds to midnight crept through the bars of their cell. The bolts crashed, the door opened, six men-at-arms entered, passed the brothers, and one of them touched Montreal.

"Ha!" said he, still sleeping, but turning round. "Ha!" said he, in the soft Provençal tongue, "sweet Adeline, we will not rise yet, — it is so long since we met!"

"What says he?" muttered the guard, shaking Montreal roughly. The Knight sprang up at once, and his hand grasped the head of his bed as for his sword. He stared round bewildered, rubbed his eyes, and then gazing on the guard, became alive to the present.

"Ye are early risers in the Capitol," said he. "What want ye of me?"

"*It* waits you!"

"*It!* What?" said Montreal.

"The rack!" replied the soldier, with a malignant scowl.

The Great Captain said not a word. He looked for one moment at the six swordsmen, as if measuring his single strength against theirs. His eye then wandered round the room. The rudest bar of iron would have been dearer to him than he had ever yet found the proofest steel of Milan. He completed his survey with a sigh, threw his mantle over his shoulders, nodded at his brethren, and followed the guard.

In a hall of the Capitol, hung with the ominous silk of white rays on a blood-red ground, sat Rienzi and his councillors. Across a recess was drawn a black curtain.

"Walter de Montreal," said a small man at the foot of the table, "Knight of the illustrious order of St. John of Jerusalem —"

"And Captain of the Grand Company!" added the prisoner, in a firm voice.

"You stand accused of divers counts, — robbery and murder in Tuscany, Romagna, and Apulia —"

"For robbery and murder, brave men and belted knights,"

said Montreal, drawing himself up, "would use the words 'war and victory.' To those charges I plead guilty! Proceed."

"You are next accused of treasonable conspiracy against the liberties of Rome for the restoration of the proscribed Barons, and of traitorous correspondence with Stefanello Colonna at Palestrina."

"My accuser?"

"Step forth, Angelo Villani!"

"*You* are my betrayer then?" said Montreal, steadily. "I deserved this. I beseech you, Senator of Rome, let this young man retire. I confess my correspondence with the Colonna and my desire to restore the Barons."

Rienzi motioned to Villani, who bowed and withdrew.

"There rests only then for you, Walter de Montreal, to relate, fully and faithfully, the details of your conspiracy."

"That is impossible," replied Montreal, carelessly.

"And why?"

"Because, doing as I please with my own life, I will not betray the lives of others."

"Bethink thee, — thou wouldst have betrayed the life of thy judge!"

"Not betrayed; thou didst not trust me."

"The law, Walter de Montreal, hath sharp inquisitors. Behold!"

The black curtain was drawn aside, and the eye of Montreal rested on the executioner and the rack! His proud breast heaved indignantly.

"Senator of Rome," said he, "these instruments are for serfs and villeins. I have been a warrior and a leader; life and death have been in my hands, — I have used them as I listed: but to mine equal and my foe I never proffered the insult of the rack."

"Sir Walter de Montreal," returned the Senator, gravely, but with some courteous respect, "your answer is that which rises naturally to the lips of brave men. But learn from me, whom fortune hath made thy judge, that no more for serf and villein than for knight and noble, are such instruments the engines of law or the tests of truth. I yielded but to the

desire of these reverend councillors to test thy nerves. But wert thou the meanest peasant of the Campagna, before my judgment-seat thou needst not apprehend the torture. Walter de Montreal, among the Princes of Italy thou hast known, among the Roman Barons thou wouldst have aided, is there one who could make that boast?"

"I desired only," said Montreal, with some hesitation, "to unite the Barons *with* thee; nor did I intrigue against thy *life!*"

Rienzi frowned. "Enough," he said hastily. "Knight of St. John, I *know* thy secret projects, — subterfuge and evasion neither befit nor avail thee. If thou didst not intrigue against my life, thou didst intrigue against the life of Rome. Thou hast but one favor left to demand on earth, — it is the manner of thy death."

Montreal's lip worked convulsively.

"Senator," said he, in a low voice, "may I crave audience with thee *alone* for one minute?"

The councillors looked up.

"My lord," whispered the eldest of them, "doubtless he hath concealed weapons, — trust him not."

"Prisoner," returned Rienzi, after a moment's pause, "if thou seekest for mercy, thy request is idle, and before my coadjutors, I have no secret! Speak out what thou hast to say!"

"Yet listen to me," said the prisoner, folding his arms, "it concerns not my life, but Rome's welfare."

"Then," said Rienzi, in an altered tone, "thy request is granted. Thou mayst add to thy guilt the design of the assassin, but for Rome I would dare greater danger."

So saying, he motioned to the councillors, who slowly withdrew by the door which had admitted Villani, while the guards retired to the farthest extremity of the hall.

"Now, Walter de Montreal, be brief, for thy time is short."

"Senator," said Montreal, "my life can but little profit you; men will say that you destroyed your creditor in order to cancel your debt. Fix a sum upon my life, estimate it at the price of a monarch's: every florin shall be paid to you,

and your treasury will be filled for five years to come. If the *Buono Stato* depends on your government, what I have asked, your solicitude for Rome will not permit you to refuse."

"You mistake me, bold robber," said Rienzi, sternly; "your *treason* I could guard against, and therefore forgive: your *ambition*, never! Mark me, I know you! Place your hand on your heart and say whether, could we change places, you, as Rienzi, would suffer all the gold of earth to purchase the life of Walter de Montreal? For men's reading of my conduct, that must I bear; for mine own reading, mine eyes must be purged from corruption. I am answerable to God for the trust of Rome. And Rome trembles while the head of the Grand Company lives in the plotting brain and the daring heart of Walter de Montreal. Man, wealthy, great, and subtle as you are, your hours are numbered; with the rise of the sun you die!"

Montreal's eyes, fixed upon the Senator's face, saw hope was over; his pride and his fortitude returned to him.

"We have wasted words," said he. "I played for a great stake, I have lost, and must pay the forfeit! I am prepared. On the threshold of the Unknown World, the dark spirit of prophecy rushes into us. Lord Senator, I go before thee to announce that in heaven or in hell, ere many days be over, room must be given to one mightier than I am!"

As he spoke, his form dilated, his eye glared; and Rienzi, cowering as never he had cowered before, shrank back, and shaded his face with his hand.

"The manner of your death?" he asked, in a hollow voice.

"The axe: it is that which befits knight and warrior. For thee, Senator, Fate hath a less noble death."

"Robber, be dumb!" cried Rienzi, passionately. "Guards, bear back the prisoner. At sunrise, Montreal—"

"*Sets* the sun of the scourge of Italy," said the Knight, bitterly. "Be it so. One request more: the Knights of St. John claim affinity with the Augustine order; grant me an Augustine confessor."

"It is granted; and in return for thy denunciations, I, who

can give thee no earthly mercy, will implore the Judge of all for pardon to thy soul!"

"Senator, I have done with man's mediation. My brethren? Their deaths are not necessary to thy safety or thy revenge!"

Rienzi mused a moment: "No," said he, "dangerous tools they were, but without the workman they may rust unharming. They served me once too. Prisoner, their lives are spared."

CHAPTER V.

THE DISCOVERY.

THE Council was broken up; Rienzi hastened to his own apartments. Meeting Villani by the way, he pressed the youth's hand affectionately. "You have saved Rome and me from great peril," said he; "the saints reward you!" Without tarrying for Villani's answer, he hurried on. Nina, anxious and perturbed, awaited him in their chamber.

"Not a-bed yet?" said he. "Fie, Nina! even thy beauty will not stand these vigils."

"I could not rest till I had seen thee. I hear — all Rome has heard it ere this — that thou hast seized Walter de Montreal, and that he will perish by the headsman."

"The first robber that ever died so brave a death," returned Rienzi, slowly unrobing himself.

"Cola, I have never crossed your schemes, your policy, even by a suggestion. Enough for me to triumph in their success, to mourn for their failure. Now, I ask thee one request, — spare me the life of this man."

"Nina —"

"Hear me, — for thee I speak! Despite his crimes, his valor and his genius have gained him admirers, even amongst his foes. Many a prince, many a state that secretly rejoices at his fall, will affect horror against his judge. Hear me further: his brothers aided your return; the world will term

you ungrateful. His brothers lent you moneys, the world — out on it! — will term you — "

"Hold!" interrupted the Senator. "All that thou sayest, my mind forestalled. But thou knowest me: to thee I have no disguise. No compact can bind Montreal's faith, no mercy win his gratitude. Before his red right hand truth and justice are swept away. If I condemn Montreal, I incur disgrace and risk danger: granted. If I release him, ere the first showers of April the chargers of the Northmen will neigh in the halls of the Capitol. Which shall I hazard in this alternative, — myself, or Rome? Ask me no more; to bed, to bed!"

"Couldst thou read my forebodings, Cola, mystic, gloomy, unaccountable!"

"Forebodings! — I have mine," answered Rienzi, sadly, gazing on space, as if his thoughts peopled it with spectres. Then, raising his eyes to heaven, he said, with that fanatical energy which made much both of his strength and weakness, "Lord, mine at least not the sin of Saul! The Amalekite shall not be saved!"

While Rienzi enjoyed a short, troubled, and restless sleep, over which Nina watched, — unslumbering, anxious, tearful, and oppressed with dark and terrible forewarnings, — the accuser was more happy than the judge. The last thoughts that floated before the young mind of Angelo Villani, ere wrapped in sleep, were bright and sanguine. He felt no honorable remorse that he had entrapped the confidence of another, — he felt only that his scheme had prospered, that his mission had been fulfilled. The grateful words of Rienzi rang in his ear, and hopes of fortune and power, beneath the sway of the Roman Senator, lulled him into slumber and colored all his dreams.

Scarce, however, had he been two hours asleep ere he was wakened by one of the attendants of the palace, himself half awake. "Pardon me, Messere Villani," said he, "but there is a messenger below from the good Sister Ursula; he bids thee haste instantly to the convent, — she is sick unto death, and has tidings that crave thy immediate presence."

Angelo, whose morbid susceptibility as to his parentage was

ever excited by vague but ambitious hopes, started up, dressed hurriedly, and joining the messenger below, repaired to the Convent. In the Court of the Capitol and by the Staircase of the Lion was already heard the noise of the workmen, and looking back, Villani beheld the scaffold, hung with black, sleeping cloudlike in the gray light of dawn; at the same time the bell of the Capitol tolled heavily. A pang shot athwart him. He hurried on; despite the immature earliness of the hour, he met groups of either sex hastening along the streets to witness the execution of the redoubted Captain of the Grand Company. The Convent of the Augustines was at the farthest extremity of that city, even then so extensive, and the red light upon the hill-tops already heralded the rising sun ere the young man reached the venerable porch. His name obtained him instant admittance.

"Heaven grant," said an old nun who conducted him through a long and winding passage, "that thou mayst bring comfort to the sick sister; she has pined for thee grievously since matins."

In a cell set apart for the reception of visitors (from the outward world) to such of the Sisterhood as received the necessary dispensation, sat the aged nun. Angelo had only seen her once since his return to Rome, and since then disease had made rapid havoc on her form and features. And now, in her shroudlike garments and attenuated frame, she seemed by the morning light as a spectre whom day had surprised above the earth. She approached the youth, however, with a motion more elastic and rapid than seemed possible to her worn and ghastly form. "Thou art come," she said. "Well, well! This morning, after matins, my confessor, an Augustine, who alone knows the secrets of my life, took me aside and told me that Walter de Montreal had been seized by the Senator, that he was adjudged to die, and that one of the Augustine brotherhood had been sent for to attend his last hours, — is it so?"

"Thou wert told aright," said Angelo, wonderingly. "The man at whose name thou wert wont to shudder, against whom thou hast so often warned me, will die at sunrise."

"So soon! so soon! Oh, Mother of Mercy, fly! Thou art

about the person of the Senator, thou hast high favor with him. Fly! down on thy knees, and as thou hopest for God's grace, rise not till thou hast won the Provençal's life."

"She raves," muttered Angelo, with white lips.

"I do *not* rave, boy!" screeched the Sister, wildly. "Know that my daughter was his leman. He disgraced our house, — a house haughtier than his own. Sinner that I was, I vowed revenge. His boy — they had only one! — was brought up in a robber's camp; a life of bloodshed, a death of doom, a futurity of hell, were before him. I plucked the child from such a fate, I bore him away, I told the father he was dead, I placed him in the path to honorable fortunes. May my sin be forgiven me! Angelo Villani, thou art that child; Walter de Montreal is thy father. But now, trembling on the verge of death, I shudder at the vindictive thoughts I once nourished. Perhaps —"

"Sinner and accursed!" interrupted Villani, with a loud shout, — "sinner and accursed thou art indeed! Know that it was *I* who betrayed thy daughter's lover! By the son's treason dies the father!"

Not a moment more did he tarry; he waited not to witness the effect his words produced. As one frantic, as one whom a fiend possesses or pursues, he rushed from the Convent, he flew through the desolate streets. The death-bell came, first indistinct, then loud, upon his ear; every sound seemed to him like the curse of God. On, on, — he passed the more deserted quarter; crowds swept before him; he was mingled with the living stream, delayed, pushed back; thousands on thousands around, before him. Breathless, gasping, he still pressed on; he forced his way — he heard not — he saw not — all was like a dream. Up burst the sun over the distant hills; the bell ceased! From right to left he pushed aside the crowd: his strength was as a giant's. He neared the fatal spot. A dead hush lay like a heavy air over the multitude. He heard a voice as he pressed along, deep and clear, — it was the voice of his father! It ceased; the audience breathed heavily; they murmured; they swayed to and fro. On, on went Angelo Villani. The guards of the Senator stopped his

way; he dashed aside their pikes, he eluded their grasp, he pierced the armed barrier, he stood on the Place of the Capitol. "Hold, hold!" he would have cried; but horror struck him dumb. He beheld the gleaming axe — he saw the bended neck. Ere another breath passed his lips, a ghastly and trunkless face was raised on high: Walter de Montreal was no more!

Villani saw, swooned not, shrank not, breathed not! But he turned his eyes from that lifted head, dropping gore, to the balcony in which, according to custom, sat, in solemn pomp, the Senator of Rome, — and the face of that young man was as the face of a demon!

"Ha!" said he, muttering to himself, and recalling the words of Rienzi seven years before, "*Blessed art thou who hast no blood of kindred to avenge!*"

CHAPTER VI.

THE SUSPENSE.

WALTER DE MONTREAL was buried in the church of St. Maria dell' Araceli. But the evil that he did lived after him! Although the vulgar had, until his apprehension, murmured against Rienzi for allowing so notorious a freebooter to be at large, he was scarcely dead ere they compassionated the object of their terror. With that singular species of piety which Montreal had always cultivated, as if a decorous and natural part of the character of a warrior, no sooner was his sentence fixed than he had surrendered himself to the devout preparation for death. With the Augustine Friar he consumed the brief remainder of the night in prayer and confession, comforted his brothers, and passed to the scaffold with the step of a hero and the self-acquittal of a martyr. In the wonderful delusions of the human heart, far from feeling remorse at a life of professional rapine and slaughter, almost the last

words of the brave warrior were in proud commendation of his own deeds. "Be valiant like me," he said to his brothers, "and remember that ye are now the heirs to the Humbler of Apulia, Tuscany, and La Marca."[1]

This confidence in himself continued at the scaffold. "I die," he said, addressing the Romans, "I die contented, since my bones shall rest in the Holy City of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and the Soldier of Christ shall have the burial-place of the Apostles. But I die unjustly. My wealth is my crime, the poverty of your state my accuser. Senator of Rome, thou mayst envy my last hour: men like Walter de Montreal perish not unavenged." So saying, he turned to the east, murmured a brief prayer, knelt down deliberately, and said as to himself, "Rome guard my ashes! Earth my memory! Fate my revenge! And now Heaven receive my soul! Strike!" At the first blow the head was severed from the body.

His treason but imperfectly known, the fear of him forgotten, all that remained of the recollection of Walter de Montreal[2] in Rome was admiration for his heroism and compassion for his end. The fate of Pandulfo di Guido, which followed some days afterwards, excited a yet deeper, though more quiet, sentiment against the Senator. "He was once Rienzi's friend!" said one man; "He was an honest, upright citizen!" muttered another; "He was an advocate of the people!" growled Cecco del Vecchio. But the Senator had wound himself up to a resolve to be inflexibly just, and to regard every peril to Rome as became a Roman. Rienzi remembered that

[1] Pregovi che vi amiate e siate valorosi al mondo, come fui io, che mi feci fare obbedienza a la Puglia, Toscana, e a La Marca. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 22.

I pray you love one another, and be valorous as was I, who made Apulia, Tuscany, and La Marca own obedience to me. — *Life of Cola di Rienzi.*

[2] The military renown and bold exploits of Montreal are acknowledged by all the Italian authorities. One of them declares that since the time of Cæsar, Italy had never known so great a captain. The biographer of Rienzi, forgetting all the offences of the splendid and knightly robber, seems to feel only commiseration for his fate. He informs us, moreover, that at Tivoli one of his servants (perhaps our friend Rodolf of Saxony), hearing his death, died of grief the following day.

he had never confided but he had been betrayed; he had never forgiven but to sharpen enmity. He was amidst a ferocious people, uncertain friends, wily enemies; and misplaced mercy would be but a premium to conspiracy. Yet the struggle he underwent was visible in the hysterical emotions he betrayed. He now wept bitterly, now laughed wildly. "Can I never again have the luxury to forgive?" said he. The coarse spectators of that passion deemed it, — some imbecility, some hypocrisy. But the execution produced the momentary effect intended. All sedition ceased, terror crept throughout the city, order and peace rose to the surface; but beneath, in the strong expression of a contemporaneous writer, "Lo mormorito quetamente suonava."[1]

On examining dispassionately the conduct of Rienzi at this awful period of his life, it is scarcely possible to condemn it of a single error in point of policy. Cured of his faults, he exhibited no unnecessary ostentation, he indulged in no exhibitions of intoxicated pride; that gorgeous imagination rather than vanity, which had led the Tribune into spectacle and pomp, was now lulled to rest by the sober memory of grave vicissitudes and the stern calmness of a maturer intellect. Frugal, provident, watchful, self-collected, "never was seen," observes no partial witness, "so extraordinary a man."[2] "In him was concentrated every thought for every want of Rome." Indefatigably occupied, he inspected, ordained, regulated all things, in the city, in the army, for peace or for war. But he was feebly supported, and those he employed were lukewarm and lethargic. Still his arms prospered. Place after place, fortress after fortress, yielded to the Lieutenant of the Senator: and the cession of Palestrina itself was hourly expected. His art and address were always strikingly exhibited in difficult situations, and the reader cannot fail to have noticed how conspicuously they were displayed in delivering himself from the iron tutelage of his foreign mercenaries. Montreal executed, his brothers imprisoned (though their lives were spared), a fear that induced respect was stricken into the breasts of

[1] "The murmur quietly sounded."

[2] *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 23.

those bandit soldiers. Removed from Rome, and under Annibaldi, engaged against the Barons, constant action and constant success withheld those necessary fiends from falling on their master; while Rienzi, willing to yield to the natural antipathy of the Romans, thus kept the Northmen from all contact with the city, and, as he boasted, was the only chief in Italy who reigned in his palace guarded only by his citizens.

Despite his perilous situation, despite his suspicions and his fears, no wanton cruelty stained his stern justice; Montreal and Pandulfo di Guido were the only state victims he demanded. If, according to the dark Machiavelism of Italian wisdom, the death of those enemies was impolitic, it was not in the act, but the mode of doing it. A prince of Bologna or of Milan would have avoided the sympathy excited by the scaffold, and the drug or the dagger would have been the safer substitute for the axe. But with all his faults, real and imputed, no single act of that foul and murderous policy, which made the science of the more fortunate princes of Italy, ever advanced the ambition or promoted the security of the Last of the Roman Tribunes. Whatever his errors, he lived and died as became a man who dreamed the vain but glorious dream that in a corrupt and dastard populace he could revive the genius of the old Republic.

Of all who attended on the Senator, the most assiduous and the most honored was still Angelo Villani. Promoted to a high civil station, Rienzi felt it as a return of youth to find one person entitled to his gratitude; he loved and confided in the youth as a son. Villani was never absent from his side, except in intercourse with the various popular leaders in the various quarters of the city; and in this intercourse his zeal was indefatigable, — it seemed even to prey upon his health; and Rienzi chid him fondly whenever, starting from his own reveries, he beheld the abstracted eye and the livid paleness which had succeeded the sparkle and bloom of youth.

Such chiding the young man answered only by the same unvarying words, —

"Senator, I have a great trust to fulfil;" and at these words he smiled.

One day Villani, while with the Senator, said rather abruptly,

"Do you remember, my lord, that before Viterbo I acquitted myself so in arms that even the Cardinal d'Albornoz was pleased to notice me?"

"I remember your valor well, Angelo; but why the question?"

"My lord, Bellini, the Captain of the Guard of the Capitol, is dangerously ill."

"I know it."

"Whom can my lord trust at the post?"

"Why, the lieutenant."

"What! — a soldier that has served under the Orsini?"

"True. Well! there is Tommaso Filangieri."

"An excellent man; but is he not kin by blood to Pandulfo di Guido?"

"Ay, is he so? It must be thought of. Hast *thou* any friend to name?" said the Senator, smiling. "Methinks thy cavils point that way."

"My lord," replied Villani, coloring, "I am too young, perhaps; but the post is one that demands fidelity more than it does years. Shall I own it? My tastes are rather to serve thee with my sword than with my pen."

"Wilt thou indeed accept the office? It is of less dignity and emolument than the one you hold; and you are full young to lead these stubborn spirits."

"Senator, I led taller men than they are to the assault at Viterbo. But, be it as seems best to your superior wisdom. Whatever you do, I pray you to be cautious. If you select a traitor to the command of the Capitol Guard — I tremble at the thought!"

"By my faith, thou dost turn pale at it, dear boy; thy affection is a sweet drop in a bitter draught. Whom can I choose better than thee? Thou shalt have the post, at least during Bellini's illness. I will attend to it to-day. The business, too, will less fatigue thy young mind than that which now employs thee. Thou art over-labored in our cause."

"Senator, I can but repeat my usual answer, — I have a great trust to fulfil!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE TAX.

THESE formidable conspiracies quelled, the Barons nearly subdued, and three parts of the Papal territory reunited to Rome, Rienzi now deemed he might safely execute one of his favorite projects for the preservation of the liberties of his native city; and this was to raise and organize in each quarter of Rome a Roman Legion. Armed in the defence of their own institutions, he thus trusted to establish amongst her own citizens the only soldiery requisite for Rome.

But so base were the tools with which this great man was condemned to work out his noble schemes that none could be found to serve their own country without a pay equal to that demanded by foreign hirelings. With the insolence so peculiar to a race that has once been great, each Roman said, "Am I not better than a German? Pay me, then, accordingly."

The Senator smothered his disgust: he had learned at last to know that the age of the Catos was no more. From a daring enthusiast, experience had converted him into a practical statesman. The Legions were necessary to Rome; they were formed, — gallant their appearance and faultless their caparisons. How were they to be paid? There was but one means to maintain Rome, — Rome must be taxed. A gabelle was put upon wine and salt.

The proclamation ran thus: —

"Romans! raised to the rank of your Senator, my whole thought has been for your liberties and welfare; already Treason defeated in the City, our banners triumphant without, attest the favor with which the Deity regards men who seek to unite liberty with law. Let us set an example to Italy and the World! Let us prove that the Roman sword can guard the Roman Forum! In each Rione of the City is provided a Legion of the Citizens, collected from the traders and artisans



of the town; they allege that they cannot leave their callings without remuneration. Your Senator calls upon you willingly to assist in your own defence. He has given you liberty; he has restored to you peace: your oppressors are scattered over the earth. He asks you now to preserve the treasures you have gained. To be free, you must sacrifice something; for freedom, what sacrifice too great? Confident of your support, I at length, for the first time, exert the right intrusted to me by office, and for Rome's salvation I tax the Romans!"

Then followed the announcement of the gabelle.

The proclamation was set up in the public thoroughfares. Round one of the placards a crowd assembled. Their gestures were vehement and unguarded; their eyes sparkled; they conversed low, but eagerly.

"He dares to tax us, then! Why, the Barons or the Pope could not do more than that!"

"Shame! shame!" cried a gaunt female; "we who were his friends! How are our little ones to get bread?"

"He should have seized the Pope's money!" quoth an honest wine-vender.

"Ah! Pandulfo di Guido would have maintained an army at his own cost. He was a rich man. What insolence in the innkeeper's son to be a Senator!"

"We are not Romans if we suffer this!" said a deserter from Palestrina.

"Fellow-citizens," exclaimed gruffly a tall man who had hitherto been making a clerk read to him the particulars of the tax imposed, and whose heavy brain at length understood that wine was to be made dearer, — "fellow-citizens, we must have a new revolution! This is indeed gratitude! What have we benefited by restoring this man? Are we always to be ground to the dust? To pay — pay — pay! Is that all we are fit for?"

"Hark to Cecco del Vecchio!"

"No, no; not now," growled the smith. "To-night the artificers have a special meeting. We 'll see; we 'll see!"

A young man muffled in a cloak, who had not been before observed, touched the smith.

"Whoever storms the Capitol the day after to-morrow at the dawn," he whispered, "shall find the guards absent!"

He was gone before the smith could look round.

The same night Rienzi, retiring to rest, said to Angelo Villani: "A bold but necessary measure this of mine! How do the people take it?"

"They murmur a little, but seem to recognize the necessity. Cecco del Vecchio *was* the loudest grumbler, but is now the loudest approver."

"The man is rough, he once deserted me; but then, that fatal excommunication! He and the Romans learned a bitter lesson in that desertion, and experience has, I trust, taught them to be honest. Well, if this tax be raised quietly, in two years Rome will be again the Queen of Italy, her army manned, her Republic formed; and then — then —"

"Then what, Senator?"

"Why then, my Angelo, Cola di Rienzi may die in peace! There is a want which a profound experience of power and pomp brings at last to us, — a want gnawing as that of hunger, wearing as that of sleep! *My Angelo, it is the want to die!*"

"My lord, I would give this right hand," cried Villani, earnestly, "to hear you say you were attached to life!"

"You are a good youth, Angelo!" said Rienzi, as he passed to Nina's chamber; and in her smile and wistful tenderness forgot for awhile — that he was a great man!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE THRESHOLD OF THE EVENT.

THE next morning the Senator of Rome held high court in the Capitol. From Florence, from Padua, from Pisa, even from Milan (the dominion of the Visconti), from Genoa, from Naples, came ambassadors to welcome his return or to thank him



for having freed Italy from the freebooter De Montreal. Venice alone, who held in her pay the Grand Company, stood aloof. Never had Rienzi seemed more prosperous and more powerful, and never had he exhibited a more easy and cheerful majesty of demeanor.

Scarce was the audience over when a messenger arrived from Palestrina. The town had surrendered, the Colonna had departed, and the standard of the Senator waved from the walls of the last hold of the rebellious Barons. Rome might now at length consider herself free, and not a foe seemed left to menace the repose of Rienzi.

The Court dissolved. The Senator, elated and joyous, repaired towards his private apartments, previous to the banquet given to the ambassadors. Villani met him with his wonted sombre aspect.

"No sadness to-day, my Angelo," said the Senator, gayly; "Palestrina is ours!"

"I am glad to hear such news, and to see my lord of so fair a mien," answered Angelo. "Does he not now desire life?"

"Till Roman virtue revives, perhaps, — yes! But thus are we fools of fortune, — to-day glad; to-morrow dejected!"

"To-morrow," repeated Villani, mechanically: "ay, — to-morrow perhaps dejected."

"Thou playest with my words, boy," said Rienzi, half angrily, as he turned away.

But Villani heeded not the displeasure of his lord.

The banquet was thronged and brilliant; and Rienzi that day, without an effort, played the courteous host.

Milanese, Paduan, Pisan, Neapolitan, vied with each other in attracting the smiles of the potent Senator. Prodigal were their compliments, lavish their promises of support. No monarch in Italy seemed more securely throned.

The banquet was over (as usual on state occasions) at an early hour, and Rienzi, somewhat heated with wine, strolled forth alone from the Capitol. Bending his solitary steps towards the Palatine, he saw the pale and veil-like mists that succeed the sunset gather over the wild grass which waves above the Palace of the Cæsars. On a mound of ruins (column

and arch overthrown) he stood, with folded arms, musing and intent. In the distance lay the melancholy tombs of the Campagna, and the circling hills, crested with the purple hues soon to melt beneath the starlight. Not a breeze stirred the dark cypress and unwaving pine. There was something awful in the stillness of the skies, hushing the desolate grandeur of the earth below. Many and mingled were the thoughts that swept over Rienzi's breast; memory was busy at his heart. How often, in his youth, had he trodden the same spot! what visions had he nursed! what hopes conceived! In the turbulence of his later life, Memory had long slept; but at that hour she re-asserted her shadowy reign with a despotism that seemed prophetic. He was wandering, a boy, with his young brother, hand in hand, by the river-side at eve; anon he saw a pale face and a gory side, and once more uttered his imprecations of revenge! His first successes, his virgin triumphs, his secret love, his fame, his power, his reverses, the hermitage of Maiella, the dungeon of Avignon, the triumphal return to Rome, — all swept across his breast with a distinctness as if he were living those scenes again! And *now!* — he shrank from the *present*, and descended the hill. The moon, already risen, shed her light over the Forum as he passed through its mingled ruins. By the Temple of Jupiter two figures suddenly emerged; the moonlight fell upon their faces, and Rienzi recognized Cecco del Vecchio and Angelo Villani. They saw him not; but, eagerly conversing, disappeared by the Arch of Trajan.

"Villani, ever active in my service!" thought the Senator; "methinks this morning I spoke to him harshly, — it was churlish in me!"

He re-entered the place of the Capitol; he stood by the staircase of the Lion: there was a red stain upon the pavement, unobliterated since Montreal's execution, and the Senator drew himself aside with an inward shudder. Was it the ghastly and spectral light of the moon, or did the face of that old Egyptian monster wear an aspect that was as of life? The stony eyeballs seemed bent upon him with a malignant scowl; and as he passed on, and looked behind, they appeared almost



preternaturally to follow his steps. A chill, he knew not why, sank into his heart. He hastened to regain his palace. The sentinels made way for him.

"Senator," said one of them, doubtingly, "Messere Angelo Villani is our new captain, — we are to obey his orders?"

"Assuredly," returned the Senator, passing on. The man lingered uneasily, as if he would have spoken; but Rienzi observed it not. Seeking his chamber, he found Nina and Irene waiting for him. His heart yearned to his wife. Care and toil had of late driven her from his thoughts, and he felt it remorsefully, as he gazed upon her noble face, softened by the solicitude of untiring and anxious love.

"Sweetest," said he, winding his arms around her tenderly, "thy lips never chide me, but thine eyes sometimes do! We have been apart too long. Brighter days dawn upon us, when I shall have leisure to thank thee for all thy care. And you, my fair sister, you smile on me! Ah! you have heard that your lover, ere this, is released by the cession of Palestrina, and to-morrow's sun will see him at your feet. Despite all the cares of the day, I remembered thee, my Irene, and sent a messenger to bring back the blush to that pale cheek. Come, come, we shall be happy again!" And with that domestic fondness common to him when harsher thoughts permitted, he sat himself beside the two persons dearest to his hearth and heart.

"So happy! If we could have many hours like this!" murmured Nina, sinking on his breast. "Yet sometimes I wish —"

"And I too," interrupted Rienzi; "for I read thy woman's thought, — *I* too sometimes wish that fate had placed us in the lowlier valleys of life! But it may come yet! Irene wedded to Adrian, Rome married to liberty, — and then, Nina, methinks you and I would find some quiet hermitage, and talk over old gauds and triumphs, as of a summer's dream. Beautiful, kiss me! Couldst thou resign these pomps?"

"For a desert with *thee*, Cola!"

"Let me reflect," resumed Rienzi: "is not to-day the seventh

of October? Yes. On the seventh, be it noted, my foes yielded to my power! Seven, — my fated number, whether ominous of good or evil! Seven months did I reign as Tribune; seven[1] years was I absent as an exile; to-morrow, that sees me without an enemy, completes my seventh week of return!"

"And seven was the number of the crowns the Roman Convents and the Roman Council awarded thee, after the ceremony which gave thee the knighthood of the *Santo Spirito!*"[2] said Nina, adding, with woman's tender wit, "the brightest association of all!"

"Follies seem these thoughts to others, and to philosophy, in truth, they are so," said Rienzi; "but all my life long, omen and type and shadow have linked themselves to action and event: and the atmosphere of other men hath not been mine. Life itself a riddle, why should riddles amaze us? *The future!* — what mystery in the very word! Had we lived all *through* the Past, since Time was, our profoundest experience of a thousand ages could not give us a guess of the events that wait the very moment we are about to enter! Thus deserted by Reason, what wonder that we recur to the Imagination, on which, by dream and symbol, God sometimes paints the likeness of things to come? Who can endure to leave the Future all unguessed, and sit tamely down to groan under the fardel of the Present? No, no! that which the foolish-wise call Fanaticism belongs to the same part of us as Hope. Each but carries us onward, — from a barren strand to a glorious, if unbounded sea. Each is the yearning for the GREAT BEYOND, which attests our immortality. Each has its visions and

[1] There was the lapse of one year between the release of Rienzi from Avignon and his triumphal return to Rome, — a year chiefly spent in the campaign of Albornoz.

[2] This superstition had an excuse in strange historical coincidences; and the number seven was indeed to Rienzi what the 3d of September was to Cromwell. The ceremony of the seven crowns which he received after his knighthood, on the nature of which ridiculous ignorance has been shown by many recent writers, was, in fact, principally a religious and typical donation (symbolical of the gifts of the Holy Spirit), conferred by the heads of convents; and that part of the ceremony which was political, was republican, not regal.



chimeras, — some false, but *some* true! Verily, a man who becomes great is often but made so by a kind of sorcery in his own soul, — a Pythia which prophesies that he *shall* be great; and so renders the life one effort to fulfil the warning! Is this folly? It were so, if all things stopped at the grave! But perhaps the very sharpening and exercising and elevating the faculties here, though but for a bootless end *on* earth, may be designed to fit the soul, thus quickened and ennobled, to some high destiny *beyond* the earth! Who can tell? Not I! Let us pray."

While the Senator was thus employed, Rome in her various quarters presented less holy and quiet scenes.

In the fortress of the Orsini, lights flitted to and fro through the gratings of the great court. Angelo Villani might be seen stealing from the postern-gate. Another hour, and the moon was high in heaven; towards the ruins of the Colosseum men, whose dress bespoke them of the lowest rank, were seen creeping from the lanes and alleys, two by two; from these ruins glided again the form of the son of Montreal. Later yet: the moon is sinking, a gray light breaking in the east, and the gates of Rome, by St. John of Lateran, are open! Villani is conversing with the sentries! The moon has set; the mountains are dim with a mournful and chilling haze; Villani is before the palace of the Capitol, — the *only* soldier there! Where are the Roman legions that were to guard alike the freedom and the deliverer of Rome?

CHAPTER THE LAST.

THE CLOSE OF THE CHASE.

It was the morning of the 8th of October, 1354. Rienzi, who rose betimes, stirred restlessly in his bed. "It is yet early," he said to Nina, whose soft arm was round his neck; "none of my people seem to be astir. Howbeit, *my* day begins before *theirs*."

"Rest yet, my Cola: you want sleep."

"No; I feel feverish, and this old pain in the side torments me. I have letters to write."

"Let me be your secretary, dearest," said Nina.

Rienzi smiled affectionately as he rose; he repaired to his closet adjoining his sleeping apartment, and used the bath, as was his wont. Then dressing himself, he returned to Nina, who, already loosely robed, sat by the writing-table, ready for her office of love.

"How still are all things!" said Rienzi. "What a cool and delicious prelude, in these early hours, to the toilsome day!"

Leaning over his wife, he then dictated different letters, interrupting the task at times by such observations as crossed his mind.

"So, now to Annibaldi! By the way, young Adrian should join us to-day. How I rejoice for Irene's sake!"

"Dear sister, yes! She loves — if any, Cola, can so love — as we do."

"Well, but to your task, my fair scribe. Ha! what noise is that? I hear an armed step, — the stairs creak; some one shouts my name."

Rienzi flew to his sword; the door was thrown rudely open, and a figure in complete armor appeared within the chamber.

"How! what means this?" said Rienzi, standing before Nina, with his drawn sword.

The intruder lifted his visor, — it was Adrian Colonna.

"Fly, Rienzi! Hasten, Signora! Thank Heaven, I can save ye yet! Myself and train released by the capture of Palestrina, the pain of my wound detained me last night at Tivoli. The town was filled with armed men, — not *thine*, Senator. I heard rumors that alarmed me. I resolved to proceed onward; I reached Rome, the gates of the city are wide open!"

"How!"

"Your guard gone. Presently I came upon a band of the retainers of the Savelli. My insignia as a Colonna misled



them. I learned that this very hour some of your enemies are within the city; the rest are on their march, — the people themselves arm against you. In the obscurer streets I passed through, the mob were already forming. They took me for thy foe and shouted. I came hither, — thy sentries have vanished. The private door below is unbarred and open. Not a soul seems left in thy palace. Haste, fly, save thyself! Where is Irene?"

"The Capitol deserted, — impossible!" cried Rienzi. He strode across the chambers to the ante-room, where his night-guard usually waited, — it was empty! He passed hastily to Villani's room, — it was untenanted! He would have passed farther, but the doors were secured without. It was evident that all egress had been cut off, save by the private door below, and *that* had been left open to admit his murderers!

He returned to his room: Nina had already gone to rouse and prepare Irene, whose chamber was on the other side, within one of their own.

"Quick, Senator!" said Adrian. "Methinks there is yet time. We must make across to the Tiber. I have stationed my faithful squires and Northmen there. A boat waits us."

"Hark!" interrupted Rienzi, whose senses had of late been preternaturally quickened. "I hear a distant shout, a familiar shout, 'Viva 'l Popolo!' Why, so say I! These must be friends."

"Deceive not thyself; thou hast scarce a friend at Rome."

"Hist!" said Rienzi, in a whisper: "save Nina, save Irene. I cannot accompany thee."

"Art thou mad?"

"No, but fearless. Besides, did I accompany, I might but destroy you all. Were I found with you, you would be massacred with me. Without me ye are safe. Yes, even the Senator's wife and sister have provoked no revenge. Save them, noble Colonna! Cola di Rienzi puts his trust in God alone!"

By this time Nina had returned, Irene with her. Afar was heard the tramp, — steady, slow, gathering, of the fatal multitude.

"Now, Cola," said Nina, with a bold and cheerful air, and she took her husband's arm, while Adrian had already found his charge in Irene.

"Yes, *now*, Nina," said Rienzi; "at length we part! If this is my last hour, *in* my last hour I pray God to bless and shield thee! For verily, thou hast been my exceeding solace,— provident as a parent, tender as a child, the smile of my hearth, the — the —"

Rienzi was almost unmanned. Emotions deep, conflicting, unspeakably fond and grateful, literally choked his speech.

"What!" cried Nina, clinging to his breast and parting her hair from her eyes as she sought his averted face. "Part? — never! This is my place, — all Rome shall not tear me from it!"

Adrian, in despair, seized her hand and attempted to drag her thence.

"Touch me not, sir!" said Nina, waving her arm with angry majesty, while her eyes sparkled as a lioness whom the huntsmen would sever from her young. "I am the wife of Cola di Rienzi, the Great Senator of Rome, and by his side will I live and die!"

"Take her hence; quick, quick! I hear the crowd advancing."

Irene tore herself from Adrian and fell at the feet of Rienzi; she clasped his knees.

"Come, my brother, come! Why lose these precious moments? Rome forbids you to cast away a life in which her very self is bound up."

"Right, Irene; Rome is bound up with me, and we will rise or fall together. No more!"

"You destroy us all!" said Adrian, with generous and impatient warmth. "A few minutes more, and we are lost. Rash man! it is not to fall by an infuriate mob that you have been preserved from so many dangers."

"I believe it," said the Senator, as his tall form seemed to dilate as with the greatness of his own soul. "I shall triumph yet! Never shall mine enemies, never shall posterity, say that a *second* time Rienzi abandoned Rome! Hark! 'Viva 'l

Popolo!' Still the cry of 'THE PEOPLE.' That cry scares none but tyrants! I shall triumph and survive!"

"And I with thee!" said Nina, firmly. Rienzi paused a moment, gazed on his wife, passionately clasped her to his heart, kissed her again and again, and then said, "Nina, I command thee, — Go!"

"Never!"

He paused. Irene's face, drowned in tears, met his eyes.

"We will all perish with you," said his sister; "you only, Adrian, *you* leave us!"

"Be it so," said the Knight, sadly, "we will *all* remain;" and he desisted at once from further effort.

There was a dead but short pause, broken but by a convulsive sob from Irene. The tramp of the raging thousands sounded fearfully distinct. Rienzi seemed lost in thought; then, lifting his head, he said calmly, "Ye have triumphed, — I join ye; I but collect these papers, and follow you. Quick, Adrian, — save them!" and he pointed meaningly to Nina.

Waiting no other hint, the young Colonna seized Nina in his strong grasp; with his left hand he supported Irene, who with terror and excitement was almost insensible. Rienzi relieved him of the lighter load; he took his sister in his arms, and descended the winding stairs. Nina remained passive: she heard her husband's step behind, — it was enough for her; she but turned once to thank him with her eyes. A tall Northman, clad in armor, stood at the open door. Rienzi placed Irene, now perfectly lifeless, in the soldier's arms, and kissed her pale cheek in silence.

"Quick, my lord," said the Northman, "on all sides they come!" So saying, he bounded down the descent with his burden. Adrian followed with Nina; the Senator paused one moment, turned back, and was in his room ere Adrian was aware that he had vanished.

Hastily he drew the coverlet from his bed, fastened it to the casement bars, and by its aid dropped (at a distance of several feet) into the balcony below. "I will not die like a rat," said he, "in the trap they have set for me! The whole crowd shall at least see and hear me."

This was the work of a moment.

Meanwhile, Nina had scarcely proceeded six paces before she discovered that she was alone with Adrian.

"Ha! Cola!" she cried: "where is he? He has gone!"

"Take heart, lady; he has returned but for some secret papers he has forgotten. He will follow us anon."

"Let us wait, then."

"Lady," said Adrian, grinding his teeth, "hear you not the crowd? On, on!" and he flew with a swifter step. Nina struggled in his grasp; Love gave her the strength of despair. With a wild laugh she broke from him. She flew back: the door was closed, but unbarred; her trembling hands lingered a moment round the spring. She opened it, drew the heavy bolt across the panels, and frustrated all attempt from Adrian to regain her. She was on the stairs, — she was in the room. Rienzi was gone! She fled, shrieking his name, through the State Chambers, — all was desolate. She found the doors opening on the various passages that admitted to the rooms below barred without. Breathless and gasping, she returned to the chamber. She hurried to the casement: she perceived the method by which he had descended below, — her brave heart told her of his brave design; she saw they were separated. "But the same roof holds us," she cried joyously, "and our fate shall be the same!" With that thought she sank in mute patience on the floor.

Forming the generous resolve not to abandon the faithful and devoted pair without another effort, Adrian had followed Nina; but too late, — the door was closed against his efforts. The crowd marched on: he heard their cry change on a sudden, — it was no longer, "LIVE THE PEOPLE!" but, "DEATH TO THE TRAITOR!" His attendant had already disappeared; and waking now only to the danger of Irene, the Colonna in bitter grief turned away, lightly sped down the descent, and hastened to the river-side, where the boat and his band awaited him.

The balcony on which Rienzi had alighted was that from which he had been accustomed to address the people; it communicated with a vast hall used on solemn occasions for State festivals, and on either side were square projecting towers,

whose grated casements looked into the balcony. One of these towers was devoted to the armory, the other contained the prison of Brettone, the brother of Montreal. Beyond the latter tower was the general prison of the Capitol; for then the prison and the palace were in awful neighborhood!

The windows of the hall were yet open, and Rienzi passed into it from the balcony. The witness of the yesterday's banquet was still there, — the wine, yet undried, crimsoned the floor, and goblets of gold and silver shone from the recesses. He proceeded at once to the armory, and selected from the various suits that which he himself had worn when, nearly eight years ago, he had chased the Barons from the gates of Rome. He arrayed himself in the mail, leaving only his head uncovered; and then taking, in his right hand, from the wall, the great Gonfalon of Rome, returned once more to the hall. Not a man encountered him. In that vast building, save the prisoners and the faithful Nina, whose presence he knew not of, the Senator was alone.

On they came, no longer in measured order, as stream after stream, — from lane, from alley, from palace and from hovel, — the raging sea received new additions. On they came, their passions excited by their numbers, — women and men, children and malignant age, — in all the awful array of aroused, released, unresisted physical strength and brutal wrath: "Death to the traitor — death to the tyrant — death to him who has taxed the people!" *"Mora 'l traditore che ha fatta la gabella! Mora!"* Such was the cry of the people, — such the crime of the Senator! They broke over the low palisades of the Capitol; they filled with one sudden rush the vast space, — a moment before so desolate, — now swarming with human beings athirst for blood!

Suddenly came a dead silence, and on the balcony above stood Rienzi; his head was bared, and the morning sun shone over the lordly brow and the hair grown gray before its time in the service of that maddening multitude. Pale and erect he stood, neither fear, nor anger, nor menace, but deep grief and high resolve, upon his features! A momentary shame, a momentary awe seized the crowd.

He pointed to the Gonfalon, wrought with the Republican motto and arms of Rome, and thus he began, —

"I too am a Roman and a Citizen! hear me!"

"Hear him not! hear him not! his false tongue can charm away our senses!" cried a voice louder than his own; and Rienzi recognized Cecco del Vecchio.

"Hear him not! down with the tyrant!" cried a more shrill and youthful tone; and by the side of the artisan stood Angelo Villani.

"Hear him not! death to the death-giver!" cried a voice close at hand; and from the grating of the neighboring prison glared near upon him, as the eye of a tiger, the vengeful gaze of the brother of Montreal.

Then from Earth to Heaven rose the roar: "Down with the tyrant! down with him who taxed the people!"

A shower of stones rattled on the mail of the Senator: still he stirred not; no changing muscle betokened fear. His persuasion of his own wonderful powers of eloquence, if he could but be heard, inspired him yet with hope; he stood collected in his own indignant, but determined thoughts. But the knowledge of that very eloquence was now his deadliest foe. The leaders of the multitude trembled lest he *should* be heard; "*and doubtless,*" says the contemporaneous biographer, "*had he but spoken, he would have changed them all, and the work been marred.*"

The soldiers of the Barons had already mixed themselves with the throng; more deadly weapons than stones aided the wrath of the multitude, — darts and arrows darkened the air; and now a voice was heard shrieking, "Way for the torches!" And red in the sunlight the torches tossed and waved, and danced to and fro, above the heads of the crowd, as if the fiends were let loose amongst the mob! And what place in hell *hath* fiends like those a mad mob can furnish? Straw and wood and litter were piled hastily round the great doors of the Capitol, and the smoke curled suddenly up, beating back the rush of the assailants.

Rienzi was no longer visible; an arrow had pierced his hand, — the right hand that supported the flag of Rome, the right

hand that had given a constitution to the Republic. He retired from the storm into the desolate hall.

He sat down; and tears, springing from no weak and woman source, but tears from the loftiest fountain of emotion, — tears that befit a warrior when his own troops desert him, a patriot when his countrymen rush to their own doom, a father when his children rebel against his love: tears such as these forced themselves from his eyes and relieved, but *they changed* his heart!

"Enough, enough!" he said, presently rising, and dashing the drops scornfully away; "I have risked, dared, toiled enough for this dastard and degenerate race. I will yet baffle their malice. I renounce the thought of which they are so little worthy! Let Rome perish! I feel, at last, that I am nobler than my country! She deserves not so high a sacrifice!"

With that feeling, Death lost all the nobleness of aspect it had before presented to him; and he resolved, in very scorn of his ungrateful foes, in very defeat of their inhuman wrath, to make one effort for his life! He divested himself of his glittering arms; his address, his dexterity, his craft, returned to him. His active mind ran over the chances of disguise, of escape; he left the hall, passed through the humbler rooms devoted to the servitors and menials, found in one of them a coarse working garb, endued himself with it, placed upon his head some of the draperies and furniture of the palace, as if escaping with them, and said, with his old *fantastico riso*:[1] "When all other friends desert me, I may well forsake myself!" With that he awaited his occasion.

Meanwhile the flames burned fierce and fast; the outer door below was already consumed; from the apartment he had deserted, the fire burst out in volleys of smoke, the wood crackled, the lead melted, with a crash fell the severed gate, — the dreadful entrance was opened to all the multitude; the proud Capitol of the Cæsars was already tottering to its fall! Now was the time! He passed the flaming door, the smouldering threshold; he passed the outer gates unscathed, — he was in

[1] Fantastic smile or laugh.

the middle of the crowd. "Plenty of pillage within," he said to the bystanders in the Roman *patois*, his face concealed by his load; "*Suso, suso a gliu traditore!*"[1] The mob rushed past him, — he went on; he gained the last stair descending into the open streets; he was at the last gate: liberty and life were before him.

A soldier (one of his own) seized him. "Pass not! Whither goest thou?"

"Beware lest the Senator escape disguised!" cried a voice behind, — it was Villani's. The concealing load was torn from his head: Rienzi stood revealed!

"I *am* the Senator!" he said in a loud voice. "Who dare touch the Representative of the People?"

The multitude were round him in an instant. Not led, but rather hurried and whirled along, the Senator was borne to the Place of the Lion. With the intense glare of the bursting flames, the gray image reflected a lurid light, and glowed — that grim and solemn monument! — as if itself of fire!

There arrived, the crowd gave way, terrified by the greatness of their victim. Silent he stood, and turned his face around; nor could the squalor of his garb, nor the terror of the hour, nor the proud grief of detection, abate the majesty of his mien or reassure the courage of the thousands who gathered, gazing, round him. The whole Capitol, wrapped in fire, lighted with ghastly pomp the immense multitude. Down the long vista of the streets extended the fiery light and the serried throng, till the crowd closed with the gleaming standards of the Colonna, the Orsini, the Savelli! Her true tyrants were marching into Rome! As the sound of their approaching horns and trumpets broke upon the burning air, the mob seemed to regain their courage. Rienzi prepared to speak; his first word was as the signal of his own death.

"Die, tyrant!" cried Cecco del Vecchio; and he plunged his dagger into the Senator's breast.

"Die, executioner of Montreal!" muttered Villani: "thus the trust is fulfilled!" and his was the second stroke. Then

[1] "Down, down with the traitor!"

as he drew back, and saw the artisan, in all the drunken fury of his brute passion, tossing up his cap, shouting aloud, and spurning the fallen lion, — the young man gazed upon him with a look of withering and bitter scorn, and said, while he sheathed his blade and slowly turned to quit the crowd, —

"Fool, miserable fool! *thou* and *these* at least had no *blood of kindred to avenge!*"

They heeded not his words, they saw him not depart; for as Rienzi, without a word, without a groan, fell to the earth, — as the roaring waves of the multitude closed over him, — a voice, shrill, sharp, and wild was heard above all the clamor. At the casement of the Palace (the casement of her bridal chamber), Nina stood! — through the flames that burst below and around, her face and outstretched arms alone visible! Ere yet the sound of that thrilling cry passed from the air, down with a mighty crash thundered that whole wing of the Capitol, — a blackened and smouldering mass.

At that hour a solitary boat was gliding swiftly along the Tiber. Rome was at a distance; but the lurid glow of the conflagration cast its reflection upon the placid and glassy stream: fair beyond description was the landscape! soft beyond all art of painter and of poet, the sunlight quivering over the autumnal herbage, and hushing into tender calm the waves of the golden river!

Adrian's eyes were strained towards the towers of the Capitol, distinguished by the flames from the spires and domes around; senseless, and clasped to his guardian breast, Irene was happily unconscious of the horrors of the time.

"They dare not, they dare not," said the brave Colonna, "touch a hair of that sacred head! If Rienzi fall, the liberties of Rome fall forever! As those towers that surmount the flames, the pride and monument of Rome, he shall rise above the dangers of the hour. Behold, still unscathed amidst the raging element, the Capitol itself is his emblem!"

Scarce had he spoken, when a vast volume of smoke obscured the fires afar off, a dull crash (deadened by the distance)

travelled to his ear, and the next moment the towers on which he gazed had vanished from the scene, and one intense and sullen glare seemed to settle over the atmosphere, making all Rome itself the funeral pyre of THE LAST OF THE ROMAN TRIBUNES!

APPENDIX I.

SOME REMARKS ON THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF RIENZI.

THE principal authority from which historians have taken their account of the life and times of Rienzi is a very curious biography by some unknown contemporary; and this, which is in the Roman *patois* of the time, has been rendered not quite unfamiliar to the French and English reader by the work of Père du Cerceau, called "Conjuration de Nicolas Gabrini, dit de Rienzi,"[1] which has at once pillaged and deformed the Roman biographer. The biography I refer to was published (and the errors of the former editions revised) by Muratori in his great collection, and has lately been reprinted separately in an improved text, accompanied by notes of much discrimination and scholastic taste, and a comment upon that celebrated poem of Petrarch, "Spirito Gentil," which the majority of Italian critics have concurred in considering addressed to Rienzi, in spite of the ingenious arguments to the contrary by the Abbé de Sade.

This biography has been generally lauded for its rare impartiality. And the author does, indeed, praise and blame alike with a most singular appearance of stolid candor. The work, in truth, is one of those not uncommon proofs, of which Boswell's "Johnson" is the most striking, — that a very valuable book may be written by a very silly man. The biographer of Rienzi appears more like the historian of Rienzi's clothes, so minute is he on all details of their color and quality, — so silent is he upon everything that could throw light upon the motives of their wearer. In fact, granting the writer every desire to be impartial, he is too foolish to be so. It requires some cleverness to judge accurately of a very clever man in very difficult circumstances; and the worthy biographer is utterly incapable of giving us any clew to the

[1] See, for a specimen of the singular blunders of the Frenchman's work, Appendix II.

actions of Rienzi, — utterly unable to explain the conduct of the man by the circumstances of the time. The weakness of his vision causes him, therefore, often to squint. We must add to his want of wisdom a want of truth, which the Herodotus-like simplicity of his style frequently conceals. He describes things which had no witness as precisely and distinctly as those which he himself had seen. For instance, before the death of Rienzi, in those awful moments when the Senator was alone, unheard, unseen, he coolly informs us of each motion and each thought of Rienzi's with as much detail as if Rienzi had returned from the grave to assist his narration. These obvious inventions have been adopted by Gibbon and others with more good faith than the laws of evidence would warrant. Still, however, to a patient and cautious reader the biography may furnish a much better notion of Rienzi's character than we can glean from the historians who have borrowed from it piecemeal. Such a reader will discard all the writer's reasonings, will think little of his praise or blame, and regard only the facts he narrates, judging them true or doubtful according as the writer had the opportunities of being himself the observer. Thus examining, the reader will find evidence sufficient of Rienzi's genius and Rienzi's failings. Carefully distinguishing between the period of his power as Tribune and that of his power as Senator, he will find the Tribune vain, haughty, and fond of display; but despite the reasonings of the biographer, he will not recognize those faults in the Senator. On the other hand, he will notice the difference between youth and maturity, hope and experience; he will notice in the Tribune vast ambition, great schemes, enterprising activity, which sober into less gorgeous and more quiet colors in the portrait of the Senator. He will find that in neither instance did Rienzi fall from his own faults; he will find that the vulgar moral of ambition, blasted by its own excesses, is not the true moral of the Roman's life; he will find that, both in his abdication as Tribune and his death as Senator, *Rienzi fell from the vices of the people*. The Tribune was a victim to ignorant cowardice, — the Senator, a victim to ferocious avarice. It is this which modern historians have failed to represent. Gibbon records, rightly, that the Count of Minorbino entered Rome with one hundred and fifty soldiers and barricadoed the quarter of the Colonna; that the bell of the Capitol sounded; that Rienzi addressed the people; that they were silent and inactive; and that Rienzi then abdicated the government. But for this he calls *Rienzi* "pusillanimous." Is not that epithet to be applied to *the people*? Rienzi invoked them to move against the robber; the people refused to obey. Rienzi wished to fight; the people refused to stir. It was not the cause of Rienzi alone which demanded their exertions, it was the cause of the people; *theirs*, not his, the shame, if one hundred and fifty foreign soldiers mastered Rome, overthrew their liberties, and restored their tyrants! Whatever Rienzi's sins, whatever his

unpopularity, *their* freedom, *their* laws, *their* republic, were at stake; and these they surrendered to one hundred and fifty hirelings! This is the fact that damns them! But Rienzi was not unpopular when he addressed and conjured them; they found no fault with him. "The sighs and groans of the people," says Sismondi, justly, "replied to his," — they could weep, but they would not fight. This strange apathy the modern historians have not accounted for; yet the principal cause was obvious, — Rienzi was *excommunicated*![1] In stating the fact, these writers have seemed to think that excommunication in Rome in the fourteenth century produced no effect! The effect it did produce I have endeavored in these pages to convey.

The causes of the second fall and final murder of Rienzi are equally misstated by modern narrators. It was from no fault of his, — no injustice, no cruelty, no extravagance; it was not from the execution of Montreal, nor that of Pandulfo di Guido, — *it was from a gabelle on wine and salt that he fell.* To preserve Rome from the tyrants it was necessary to maintain an armed force; to pay the force a tax was necessary; the tax was imposed, — and the multitude joined with the tyrants, and

[1] And this curse I apprehend to have been the more effective in the instance of Rienzi from a fact that it would be interesting and easy to establish; namely, that he owed his rise as much to religious as to civil causes. He aimed evidently to be a religious reformer. All his devices, ceremonies, and watchwords were of a religious character. The monks took part with his enterprise, and joined in the revolution. His letters are full of mystical fanaticism. His references to ancient heroes of Rome are always mingled with invocations to her Christian Saints. The Bible, at that time little read by the public civilians of Italy, is constantly in his hands, and his addresses studded with texts. His very garments were adorned with sacred and mysterious emblems. No doubt the ceremony of his knighthood, which Gibbon ridicules as an act of mere vanity, was but another of his religious extravagances; for he peculiarly dedicated his Knighthood to the service of the Santo Spirito; and his bathing in the vase of Constantine was quite of a piece, not with the vanity of the Tribune, but with the extravagance of the Fanatic. In fact, they tried hard to prove him a heretic; but he escaped a charge under the mild Innocent which a century or two before, or a century or two afterwards, would have sufficed to have sent a dozen Rienzis to the stake. I have dwelt the more upon this point because if it be shown that religious causes operated with those of liberty, we throw a new light upon the whole of that most extraordinary revolution, and its suddenness is infinitely less striking. The deep impression Rienzi produced upon that populace was thus stamped with the spirit of the religious enthusiast more than that of the classical demagogue. And, as in the time of Cromwell, the desire for temporal liberty was warmed and colored by the presence of a holier and more spiritual fervor. "The Good Estate" (*Buono Stato*) of Rienzi reminds us a little of the Good Cause of General Cromwell.

their cry was, "Perish the traitor *who has made the gabelle!*" This was their only charge, this the only crime that their passions and their fury could cite against him.

The faults of Rienzi are sufficiently visible, and I have not unsparingly shown them; but we must judge men, not according as they approach perfection, but according as their good or bad qualities preponderate, — their talents or their weaknesses; the benefits they effected, the evil they wrought. For a man who rose to so great a power, Rienzi's faults were singularly few, — *crimes* he committed none. He is almost the only man who ever rose from the rank of a citizen to a power equal to that of monarchs without a single act of violence or treachery. When *in* power, he was vain, ostentatious, and imprudent, — always an enthusiast, often a fanatic; but his very faults had greatness of soul, and his very fanaticism at once supported his enthusiastic daring and proved his earnest honesty. It is evident that no heinous charge could be brought against him even by his enemies, for all the accusations to which he was subjected, when excommunicated, exiled, fallen, were for two offences which Petrarch rightly deemed the proofs of his virtue and his glory, — first, for declaring Rome to be free; secondly, for pretending that the Romans had a right of choice in the election of the Roman Emperor.[1] Stern, just, and inflexible as he was when Tribune, his fault was never that of *wanton* cruelty. The accusation against him, made by the gentle Petrarch, indeed, was, that he was not determined enough, — that he did not consummate the revolution by exterminating the patrician tyrants. When Senator, he was, without sufficient ground, accused of avarice in the otherwise just and necessary execution of Montreal.[2] It was natural enough that his enemies and the vulgar should suppose that he executed a creditor to get rid of a debt; but it was inexcusable in later and wiser and fairer writers to repeat so grave a calumny without at least adding the obvious suggestion that the avarice of Rienzi could have been much better gratified by sparing than by destroying the life of one of the richest subjects in Europe. Montreal, we may be quite sure, would have purchased his life at an immeasurably higher price than the paltry sum lent to Rienzi by his brothers. And this is not a probable hypothesis, but a certain fact, for we are expressly

[1] The charge of heresy was dropped.

[2] Gibbon, in mentioning the execution of Montreal, omits to state that Montreal was more than suspected of conspiracy and treason to restore the Colonna. Matthew Villani records it as a common belief that such truly was the offence of the Provençal. The biographer of Rienzi gives additional evidence of the fact. Gibbon's knowledge of this time was superficial. As one instance of this, he strangely enough represents Montreal as the head of the *first* Free Company that desolated Italy: he took that error from the Père du Cercean.

told that Montreal, "knowing the Tribune was in want of money, offered Rienzi that if he would let him go, he, Montreal, would furnish him not only with twenty thousand florins [four times the amount of Rienzi's debt to him], but with as many soldiers and as much money as he pleased." This offer Rienzi did not attend to. Would he have rejected it had avarice been his motive? And what culpable injustice to mention the vague calumny without citing the practical contradiction! When Gibbon tells us, also, that "the *most* virtuous citizen of Rome," meaning Pandulfo, or Pandulficcio, di Guido,[1] was sacrificed to his jealousy, he a little exaggerates the expression bestowed upon Pandulfo, which is that of "virtuoso assai," — and that expression, too, used by a man who styles the robber Montreal "eccellente uomo, di quale fama suono per tutta la Italia di virtude"[2] (so good a moral critic was the writer!); but he also altogether waives all mention of the probabilities, that are sufficiently apparent, of the scheming of Pandulfo to supplant Rienzi and to obtain the "Signoria del Popolo." Still, however, if the death of Pandulfo may be considered a blot on the memory of Rienzi, it does not appear that it was this which led to his own fate. The cry of the mob surrounding his palace was not, "Perish him who executed Pandulfo," it was, — and this again and again must be carefully noted, — it was nothing more nor less than "*Perish him who has made the gabelle!*"

Gibbon sneers at the military skill and courage of Rienzi. For this sneer there is no cause. His first attempts, his first rise, attested sufficiently his daring and brave spirit; in every danger he was present, never shrinking from a foe so long as he was supported by the people. He distinguished himself at Viterbo, when in the camp of Albornoz, in several feats of arms,[3] and his end was that of a hero. So much for his courage; as to his military skill, it would be excusable enough if Rienzi — the eloquent and gifted student, called from the closet and the rostrum to assume the command of an army — should have been deficient in the art of war; yet, somehow or other, upon the whole, his arms prospered. He defeated the chivalry of Rome at her gates; and if he did not, after his victory, march to Marino, for which his biographer[4] and Gibbon blame him, the reason is sufficiently clear, — "Volea pecunia per soldati;" *he wanted money for the soldiers!* On his return as Senator it must be remembered that he had to besiege Palestrina, which was considered even by the ancient Romans almost impregnable by position; but during the few weeks he was in power, Palestrina yielded, all his

[1] Matthew Villani speaks of him as a wise and good citizen, of great repute among the people — and this, it seems, he really was.

[2] "An excellent man, whose fame for valor resounded throughout all Italy."

[3] Vita di Cola di Rienzi, lib. ii. cap. 14.

[4] In this the anonymous writer compares him gravely to Hannibal, who knew how to conquer, but not how to use his conquest.

open enemies were defeated, the tyrants expelled, Rome free, — and this without support from any party, Papal or Popular; or, as Gibbon well expresses it, "suspected by the people — abandoned by the prince."

On regarding what Rienzi did, we must look to his means, to the difficulties that surrounded him, to the scantiness of his resources. We see a man without rank, wealth, or friends raising himself to the head of a popular government in the metropolis of the Church, in the City of the Empire. We see him reject any title save that of a popular magistrate, establish at one stroke a free constitution, — a new code of law. We see him first expel, then subdue, the fiercest aristocracy in Europe, conquer the most stubborn banditti, rule impartially the most turbulent people, embruted by the violence and sunk in the corruption of centuries. We see him restore trade, establish order, create civilization as by a miracle, receive from crowned heads homage and congratulation, outwit, conciliate, or awe the wiliest priesthood of the Papal Diplomacy, and raise his native city at once to sudden yet acknowledged eminence over every other state, its superior in arts, wealth, and civilization; we ask what errors we are to weigh in the opposite balance, and we find an unnecessary ostentation, a fanatical extravagance, and a certain insolent sternness! But what are such offences, — what the splendor of a banquet, or the ceremony of knighthood, or a few arrogant words, — compared with the vices of almost every prince who was his contemporary? This is the way to judge character: we must compare men with men, and not with ideals of what men should be. We look to the amazing benefits Rienzi conferred upon his country. We ask his means, and see but his own abilities. His treasury becomes impoverished, his enemies revolt, the Church takes advantage of his weakness, he is ex-communicated, the soldiers refuse to fight, the people refuse to assist, the Barons ravage the country, the ways are closed, the provisions are cut off from Rome.[1] A handful of banditti enter the city, Rienzi proposes to resist them, the People desert, he abdicates. Rapine, Famine, Massacre, ensue, they who deserted, regret, repent; yet he is still unassisted, alone: now an exile, now a prisoner, his own genius saves him from every peril and restores him to greatness. He returns, the Pope's Legate refuses him arms, the People refuse him money. He re-establishes law and order, expels the tyrants, renounces his former faults,[2] is prudent, wary,

[1] Allora le strade furo chiuse, li massari de la terre non portavano grano, ogni die nasceva nuovo rumores. — *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. cap. 37.

[2] This, the second period of his power, has been represented by Gibbon and others as that of his principal faults, and he is evidently at this time no favorite with his contemporaneous biographer; but looking to what he *did*, we find amazing dexterity, prudence, and energy in the most difficult crises, and *none of his earlier faults*. It is true that he does not show the same brilliant

provident, reigns a few weeks, taxes the People in support of the People, and is torn to pieces! One day of the rule that followed is sufficient to vindicate his reign and avenge his memory; and for centuries afterwards, whenever that wretched and degenerate populace dreamed of glory or sighed for justice, they recalled the bright vision of their own victim, and deplored the fate of Cola di Rienzi. That he was not a tyrant is clear in this: when he was dead, he was bitterly regretted. The People never regret a tyrant! From the unpopularity that springs from other faults there is often a reaction; but there is no reaction in the populace towards their betrayer or oppressor. A thousand biographies cannot decide upon the faults or merits of a ruler like the one fact whether he is beloved or hated ten years after he is dead; but if the ruler has been murdered by the People, and is then regretted by them, their repentance is his acquittal.

I have said that the moral of the Tribune's life, and of this fiction, is not the stale and unprofitable moral that warns the ambition of an individual: more vast, more solemn, and more useful, it addresses itself to nations. If I judge not erringly, it proclaims that, to be great and free, a People must trust, not to individuals, but themselves; that there is no sudden leap from servitude to liberty; that it is to institutions, not to men, that they must look for reforms that last beyond the hour; that their own passions are the real despots they should subdue, their own reason the true regenerator of abuses. With a calm and a noble people, the individual ambition of a citizen can never effect evil; to be impatient of chains is not to be worthy of freedom, — to murder a magistrate

extravagance which, I suspect, dazzled his contemporaries more than his sounder qualities; but we find that in a few weeks he had conquered all his powerful enemies, that his eloquence was as great as ever, his promptitude greater, his diligence indefatigable, his foresight unslumbering. "He alone," says the biographer, "carried on the affairs of Rome; but his officials were slothful and cold." This, too, tortured by a painful disease, already — though yet young — broken and infirm. The only charges against him as Senator were the deaths of Montreal and Pandulfo di Guido, the imposition of the gabelle, and the renunciation of his former habits of rigid abstinence, for indulgence in wine and feasting. Of the first charges, the reader has already been enabled to form a judgment. To the last, alas! the reader must extend indulgence, and for it he may find excuse. We must compassionate even more than condemn the man to whom excitement has become nature, and who resorts to the physical stimulus or the momentary Lethe when the mental exhilarations of hope, youth, and glory begin to desert him. His alleged intemperance, however, which the Romans (a peculiarly sober people) might perhaps exaggerate, and for which he gave the excuse of a thirst produced by disease contracted in the dungeon of Avignon, evidently and confessedly did not in the least diminish his attention to business, which, according to his biographer, was at that time greater than ever.

is not to ameliorate the laws.[1] The People write their own condemnation whenever they use characters of blood; and theirs alone the madness and the crime if they crown a tyrant or butcher a victim.

[1] Rienzi was murdered because the Romans had been in the habit of murdering whenever they were displeased. They had, very shortly before, stoned one magistrate and torn to pieces another. By the same causes and the same career a People may be made to resemble the bravo whose hand wanders to his knife at the smallest affront, and if to-day he poniards the enemy who assaults him, to-morrow he strikes the friend who would restrain.

APPENDIX II.

A WORD UPON THE WORK BY PÈRE DU CERCEAU AND PÈRE BRUMOY ENTITLED "CONJURATION DE NICOLAS GABRINI, DIT DE RIENZI, TYRAN DE ROME."

SHORTLY after the Romance of "Rienzi" first appeared, a translation of the biography compiled by Cerceau and Brumoy was published by Mr. Whittaker. The translator, in a short and courteous advertisement, observes, "That it has always been considered as a work of authority, and even Gibbon appears to have relied on it without further research;[1] . . . that, as a record of facts, therefore, the work will, it is presumed, be acceptable to the public." The translator has fulfilled his duty with accuracy, elegance, and spirit, and he must forgive me if, in justice to history and Rienzi, I point out a very few from amongst a great many reasons why the joint labor of the two worthy Jesuits cannot be considered either a work of authority or a record of facts. The translator observes in his preface, "that the general outline [of Du Cerceau's work] was *probably* furnished by an Italian Life written by a contemporary of Rienzi." The fact, however, is, that Du Cerceau's book is little more than a wretched paraphrase of that very Italian Life mentioned by the translator, — full of blunders, from ignorance of the peculiar and antiquated dialect in which the original is written, and of assumptions by the Jesuit himself which rest upon no authority whatever. I will first show, in support of this assertion, what the Italians themselves think of the work of Fathers Brumoy and Du Cerceau. The Signor Zefirino Re, who has proved himself singularly and minutely acquainted with the history of that time, and whose notes to the "Life of Rienzi" are characterized by acknowledged acuteness and research, thus describes the manner in which the two Jesuits compounded this valuable "record of facts."

"Father du Cerceau for his work made use of a French translation of the Life by the Italian contemporary printed in Bracciano, 1624, exe-

[1] Here, however, he does injustice to Gibbon.

cuted by Father Sanadon, another Jesuit, from whom he received the MS. This proves that Du Cerceau knew little of our 'volgar lingua' of the fourteenth century. But the errors into which he has run show that even that little was unknown to his guide, and still less to Father Brumoy (however learned and reputed the latter might be in *French* literature), who after the death of Du Cerceau supplied the deficiencies in the first pages of the author's MS., which were, I know not how, lost; and in this part are found the more striking errors in the work, which shall be noticed in the proper place. In the mean time, one specimen will suffice. In the third chapter, book i., Cola, addressing the Romans, says, 'Che lo giubileo, si approssima, che se la gente, la quale verrà al giubileo, li trova sproveduti di annona, le pietre (per metatesi sta scritto le preite) ne porteranno da Roma per rabbia di fame, e le pietre non basteranno a tanta moltitudine.' Il francese traduce: 'Le jubilé approche, et vous n'avez ni provisions ni vivres; les étrangers . . . trouveront votre ville dénuée de tout. Ne comptez point sur les secours des gens d'Église; ils sortiront de la ville, s'ils n'y trouvent de quoi subsister: et d'ailleurs pourroient-ils suffire à la multitude innombrable que se trouvera dans vos murs?'[1] Buon Dio!" exclaims the learned Zefirino, "Buon Dio! le pietre prese per tanta gente di chiesa!"[2]

Another blunder, little less extraordinary, occurs in chapter vi., in which the ordinances of Rienzi's Buono Stato are recited.

It is set forth as the third ordinance: "Che nulla casa di Roma sia data per terra per alcuna cagione, ma vada in commune;" which simply means that the houses of delinquents should in no instance be razed, but added to the community or confiscated. This law being intended partly to meet the barbarous violences with which the excesses and quarrels of the Barons had half dismantled Rome, and principally to repeal some old penal laws by which the houses of a certain class of offenders might be destroyed; but the French translator construes it, "*Que nulle maison de Rome ne seroit donnée en propre*, pour quelque raison que ce pût être, mais que les revenus en appartiendroient au public!"[3]

But enough of the blunders arising from ignorance; I must now be permitted to set before the reader a few of the graver offences of wilful assumption and preposterous invention.

When Rienzi condemned some of the Barons to death, the Père thus writes (I take the recent translation published by Mr. Whittaker): —

[1] The English translator could not fail to adopt the Frenchman's ludicrous mistake.

[2] See Preface to Zefirino Re's edition of the "Life of Rienzi," p. 9, note on Du Cerceau.

[3] The English translator makes this law unintelligible: "That no family of Rome shall appropriate to their own use what they think fit, but that the revenues shall appertain to the public!" The revenues of what?

"The next day the Tribune, resolving more than ever to rid himself of his prisoners, ordered tapestries of two colors, red and white, to be laid over the place whereon he held his councils, and which he had made choice of to be the theatre of this bloody tragedy, as the extraordinary tapestry seemed to declare. He afterwards sent a cordelier to every one of the prisoners to administer the sacraments, and then ordered the Capitol bell to be tolled. At that fatal sound and the sight of the confessors, the Lords no longer doubted of sentence of death being passed upon them. They all confessed except the old Colonna, and many received the communion. In the meanwhile the people, *naturally prompt to attend, when their first impetuosity had time to calm, could not without pity behold the dismal preparations which were making. The sight of the bloody color in the tapestry shocked them.* On this first impression they joined in opinion in relation to so many illustrious heads now going to be sacrificed, and lamented more their unhappy catastrophe as no crime had been proved upon them to render them worthy of such barbarous treatment. *Above all, the unfortunate Stephen Colonna, whose birth, age, and affable behavior commanded respect, excited a particular compassion. An universal silence and sorrow reigned among them.* Those who were nearest Rienzi discovered an alteration. They took the opportunity of imploring his mercy towards the prisoners in terms the most affecting and moving."

Will it be believed that in the original from which the Père du Cerceau borrows, or rather imagines, this touching recital, *there is not a single syllable about the pity of the people, nor their shock at the bloody colors of the tapestry*, nor their particular compassion for the unfortunate Stephen Colonna? In fine, the *People* are not even mentioned at all. All that is said is, "Some Roman citizens [alcuni cittadini Romani], considering the judgment Rienzi was about to make, interposed with soft and caressing words, and at last changed the opinion of the Tribune;" all the rest is the pure fiction of the ingenious Frenchman! Again, Du Cerceau, describing the appearance of the Barons at this fatal moment, says, "Notwithstanding the grief and despair visible in their countenances, *they showed a noble indignation, generally attendant on innocence in the hour of death.*" What says the authority from which alone, except his own, the good Father could take his account? Why, not a word about this noble indignation or this parade of innocence! The original says simply, that "*the Barons were so frozen with terror that they were unable to speak* [diventaso si gelati che non poteano favellare]; that the greater part humbled themselves [e prese penitenza e comunione];" that when Rienzi addressed them, "*all* the Barons [come dannati] stood in sadness."[1] Du Cerceau then proceeds to state that "although he [Rienzi] was grieved at heart to behold his victims

[1] See Vita di Cola di Rienzi, lib. i. cap. 29.

snatched from him, he endeavored to make a merit of it in the eyes of the People." *There is not a word of this in the original!*

So when Rienzi, on a later occasion, placed the Prefect John di Vico in prison, this Jesuit says, "*To put a gloss upon this action* before the eyes of the people, Rienzi *gave out that* the Governor, John di Vico, keeping a correspondence with the conspirators, came with no other view than to betray the Romans." And if this scribbler, who pretends to have consulted the Vatican MSS., had looked at the most ordinary authorities, he would have seen that John di Vico *did* come with that view. (See, for Di Vico's secret correspondence with the Barons, La Cron. Bologn., p. 406; and La Cron. Est., p. 444.)

Again, in the battle between the Barons and the Romans at the gates, Du Cerceau thus describes the conduct of the Tribune: "The Tribune, amidst his troops, knew so little of what had passed that seeing at a distance one of his standards fall, he looked upon all as lost, and, casting up his eyes to heaven full of despair, cried out, 'O God! will you then forsake me?' But no sooner was he informed of the entire defeat of his enemies than his dread and cowardice even turned to boldness and arrogance."

Now, in the original all that is said of this is, "That it is true that the standard of the Tribune fell; the Tribune astonished [or, if you please, dismayed, *sbigottio*], stood with his eyes raised to heaven, and could find no other words than, 'O God! hast thou betrayed me?'" This evinced, perhaps, alarm or consternation at the fall of his standard, — a consternation natural, not to a coward, but a fanatic, at such an event. But not a word is said about Rienzi's cowardice in the action itself; it is not stated when the accident happened, — nothing bears out the implication that the Tribune was remote from the contest and knew little of what passed. And if this ignorant Frenchman had *consulted any other contemporaneous historian whatever*, he would have found it asserted by them all that the fight was conducted with great valor, both by the Roman populace and their leader on one side, and the Barons on the other. — G. Vill., lib. xii. cap. 105; Cron. Sen., tom. xv. Murat., p. 119; Cron. Est., p. 444. Yet Gibbon rests his own sarcasm on the Tribune's courage solely on the baseless exaggeration of this Père du Cerceau.

So little, indeed, did this French pretender know of the history of the time and place he treats of, that he imagines the Stephen Colonna who was killed in the battle above mentioned was the *old* Stephen Colonna, and is very pathetic about his "venerable appearance," etc. This error, with regard to a man so eminent as Stephen Colonna the elder, is inexcusable; for had the priest turned over the other pages of the very collection in which he found the biography he deforms, he would have learned that old Stephen Colonna was alive some time after that battle. (Cron. Sen. Murat., tom. xv. p. 121.)

Again, just before Rienzi's expulsion from the office of Tribune, Du Cerceau, translating in his headlong way the old biographer's account of the causes of Rienzi's loss of popularity, says, "He shut himself up in his palace, and his presence was known only by the rigorous punishments which he caused his agents to inflict upon the innocent." Not a word of this in the original.

Again, after the expulsion, Du Cerceau says that the Barons seized upon the "immense riches" he had amassed. The words in the original are, "grandi ornamenti," — which are very different things from immense riches. But the most remarkable sins of commission are in this person's account of the second rise and fall of Rienzi under the title of Senator. Of this I shall give but one instance: —

"The Senator, who perceived it, became only the more cruel. His jealousies produced only fresh murders. In the continual dread he was in, that the general discontent would terminate in some secret attempt upon his person, he determined to intimidate the most enterprising, by sacrificing sometimes one, sometimes another, and chiefly those whose riches rendered them the more guilty in his eyes. Numbers were sent every day to the Capitol prison. Happy were those who could get off with the confiscation of their estates!"

Of these grave charges there is not a syllable in the original! And so much for the work of Père Cerceau and Père Brumoy, by virtue of which historians have written of the life and times of Rienzi, and upon the figments of which the most remarkable man in an age crowded with great characters is judged by the general reader!

I must be pardoned for this criticism, which might not have been necessary had not the work to which it relates, in the English translation quoted from (a translation that has no faults but those of the French original), been actually received as an historical and indisputable authority, and opposed with a triumphant air to some passages in my own narrative which were literally taken from the authentic records of the time.

THE END.

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